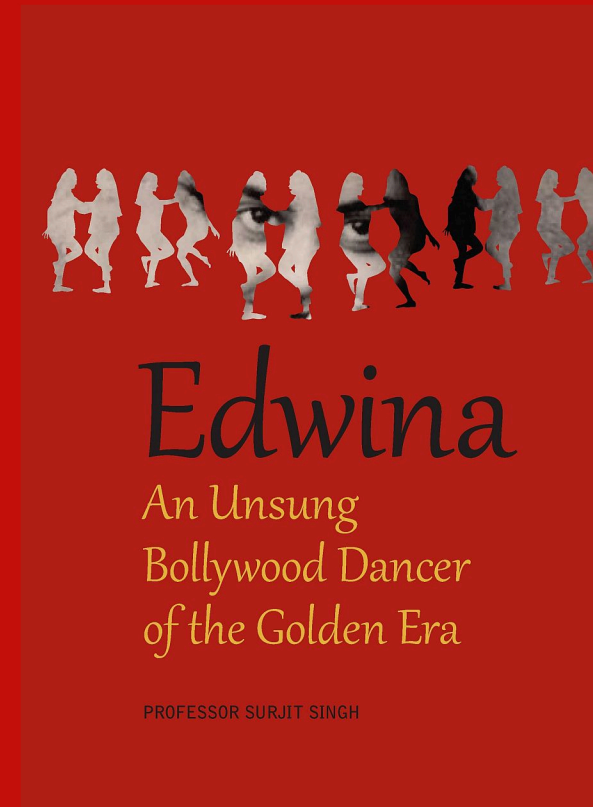




Professor Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fanatic, period. He is a retired Theoretical Physicist. He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996. He has had a website since 1999, <http://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/> He has published seven books on Hindi films, four jointly with others.



Autobiography of a
Moderately Unknown
Indian-American
PART I

PROF SURJIT SINGH

Autobiography of a
Moderately Unknown
Indian-American
PART I

Professor Surjit Singh

SINGH

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By professor toofaanii publishers, East Lansing, MI USA

DEDICATION

My Parents

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big thanks to my wife Harmesh, and three children, Jai, Libby, and Raja for always being there for me.

Professor Surjit Singh

East Lansing, MI

May 2024

CONTENTS

PREFACE	9
My World Line	11
Cities I have lived in	11
Lahore, Pakistan (mid-Forties)	11
Kaithal, Haryana (1951-53)	11
Maler Kotla, Panjab (1953-1956)	11
Ludhiana, Panjab (1956-1966)	11
Chandigarh (1966-1969)	12
Pittsburgh, PA (1969-1975)	12
Khanna, Panjab (1975)	12
Bombay, Maharashtra (1975-1977, 1983)	13
Waterloo, Ontario (1983-1987)	14
Lubbock, TX (1987-1998)	14
San Diego, CA (1998-2019)	15
Lansing, MI (2019-)	15
Schools I attended	16
Some Elementary School, Kaithal, Haryana (1952)	16
mai.n bataa_uu.N jii?	16
Three Nobel Laureates	16
Shri Atmanand Jain Primary School, Maler Kotla, Panjab (1952-1956)	17

Village banaam city	17
I learn Urdu	17
Books can be wrong	17
Village banaam city, part II	18
Khalsa National Higher Secondary School, Ludhiana, Panjab (1956-1963)	18
Hands thrust into the ticket window	18
Colleges attended by Surjit Singh	19
Government College, Ludhiana (1963-1966)	19
Did good, won awards	19
Saw movies	19
Copying incident	19
Panjab University, Chandigarh (1966-1969)	20
Physics or Maths	20
Fascination with Hindi	20
VC's son	20
I lost a chess competition	21
Enter Pathria	21
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh (1969-1975)	22
Oranges and milk	22
Condensed Matter Physics	22
Back to India	23
Jobs in the Universities (1975-1998)	23

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

DETAILS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE	25
Pittsburgh	25
TIFR	25
Shillong	25
Waterloo	25
Lubbock	26
DETAILS OF POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE	26
EXPERIENCE OF GUIDING RESEARCH	27
G. P. Singh	27
W. L. Basaiawmoit	27
R. Krishnan	27
M. Vedamuthu	27
C. H. Cho and J. Urquidi	27
Last Job of Surjit Singh	28
My Patent	28
VIGNETTES FROM MY LIFE	31
APPENDIX	95
List of Publications of Surjit Singh	95
Publications from the University of Pittsburgh	97
Publications from India	97
Publications from Canada	99
Publications from USA	101

PHOTO GALLERY	107
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	110
OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER	111

PREFACE

Born during the partition, grew up in Jamalpura, Maler Kotla (primary school), Ludhiana (high school and college), Chandigarh (Masters degree), Pittsburgh (Doctoral degree), Shillong (Lecturer), Bombay (Visiting Scientist), Waterloo, Canada and Lubbock Texas (Visiting Research Associate Professor), San Diego, California (Senior Scientist), Lansing and East Lansing, Michigan (retired), I hereby declare myself to be a “Moderately Unknown Indian-American”.

Listening to songs in 1949 and 50s and 60s, watching movies since 1952, collecting music since 1969, writing about Hindi films since 1996, publishing books since 2015, I hereby declare myself to be a “Die-hard Movie fanatic, Period”.

This is a partial record of my life, regular and musical, I have too much remember and put down. This is the first in a series, mainly based on my website and my Facebook posts. I had a lot of fun writing it. I hope you like it too!

SINGH

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My World Line

In this chapter, I describe the various cities I lived and some incidents I remember.

Cities I have lived in

Lahore, Pakistan (mid-Forties)

I was born in Lahore sometime in the mid-Forties. My father worked for a bank near Anarkali Bazaar. Our family actually belongs to East Punjab, he just went there for the job. He was lucky to escape during the Partition of India with his life, wife and little me.

Kaithal, Haryana (1951-53)

My father had a Persian wheel manufacturing and installing shop in Kaithal. We used to live on Karnal Road, near some Electric Generation Plant. Kaithal had only one cinema, Hind, owned by R. C. Khanna. I did not get to see a movie there. My mother passed away of Tuberculosis in 1953, my father sold the business, all of us returned to our ancestral home.

Maler Kotla, Panjab (1953-1956)

Our ancestral home is in a village called Jamalpura near Maler Kotla. Our ancestors originally came from a village near Amritsar during the 18th century when Jamalpura was established by Jamal Khan, the then Nawab of Maler Kotla. The village population was about 2/3 Muslim in the fifties. It is probably even more now. [My father sold the ancestral house and built anew one in Khanna.] The city had (and still has) only 2 cinemas then, both owned by Dogar Mal. The older one, Moti, was in fact called Dogar dii Talkie. I saw my first movie here. It was Shrimatiji (1952). I remember only one scene in which there were some people in an open vehicle that fell into a swimming pool. [Thanks to Narsingh D Agnish, I saw the movie again recently, but still could not remember anything more.]

After my father got married again and moved to Ludhiana, all of us shifted there.

Ludhiana, Panjab (1956-1966)

We lived in various locations, Wakefield Gunj, Miller Gunj, Dera Kalsian. The city of Ludhiana had six cinemas in 1956, Raikhy, Naulakha, Minerva, Society, Kailash and Deepak. My father's mother's uncle's son

Dharimal Kalsi (not making it up!) had the roofing contract for Laxmi cinema (the seventh) that was being built then. Saw my first English movie, *The Lost World*, in Ludhiana. I did not understand much. Only one sentence spoken by an American actor remains in memory. He pointed to a gun and said, "This is a gun. It shoots bang, bang, bang!". I saw it again recently; it is decent adventure movie.

After finishing my BS degree with Honors in Mathematics, standing first in the Panjab University in B Sc Parts I, II, II and Mathematics Honors and winning four medals, I joined the University for getting my Masters degree.

Chandigarh (1966-1969)

I lived on campus in Bhatanagar Hall (Boys Hostel No. 3). The hostel-in-charge was Vishwanath Tiwary, who was tragically killed during the extremist phase. We were not allowed to be out after 10 pm. Of course, we saw late movies in Sector 17, walked back for fun and entered the hostel through a not-so-secret opening made just for this purpose. Had great fun here, being first time away from parents.

I was set to do a Ph D there and be a lecturer, reader, professor etc, when Professor Raj Kumar Pathria joined as one of the youngest professors, he persuaded me to go abroad for Ph D. This is the first time he changed my life.

Pittsburgh, PA (1969-1975)

Lived near campus in various locations. One of them was Mrs. Miller's Place. She was a nice old Jewess who always had room for one more Indian. One of my fellow students, first class first from Nagpur, quit Physics after the first year and did Master's in Computer Science. He immediately started making more money than his advisor! My room-mate was Shashikant Phatak from BARC. He had lots of left-wing extremist friends who had endless discussions on how to change the world. I briefly fell under the spell of some right-wingers, but returned to the middle soon enough. We have always remained good friends. Saw lots of Hollywood movies. Fell in love with classic and contemporary Hollywood, particularly, Marx Brothers, Woody Allen, Hitchcock, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart and others.

As promised to my grandmother, who brought me up after my birth mother passed away, after defending my dissertation, I returned to India.

Khanna, Panjab (1975)

After landing in India during March 1975, spent some time with my father and discussed marriage plans. I had already secured a job in TIFR,

Bombay while I was in the US.

Bombay, Maharashtra (1975-1977, 1983)

On June 25, 1975, I was traveling by train to Bombay, when the headlines screamed of Emergency. I immediately remembered a line from the Navarang song, *tum pachhim ho*, in which the poet says something like,

is dharatii me.n janame the saadhuu, us dharatii me.n janame Dictator.

Leave it to the Nehrus to prove a poet wrong! Lived in the Hostel near the TIFR campus. Saw lots of old Hindi movies. Every Sunday, I would scan the ads and proceed via local trains, scooters and taxis to find the theaters and see the movies. Went as far as Thane. Saw many movies in Alexandra, Taj and other cinemas in the infamous red-light district. Saw Albela once in Jai Hind (I think, in Lal Bagh) and three times in Maratha Mandir (where it moved to) and Sholay eight times in Minerva. Saw lots of non-English movies via a movie club. Started building my song collection. Orderd a copy of the Hindi Film Geet Kosh (Volume 3) from Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and instantaneously became his biggest fan. My music taste changed to the era of 1930s and 1940s, thanks to Bharat Upadhyay, who played records like Hits of the 30s and 40s, every Wednesday lunchtime in a TIFR auditorium.

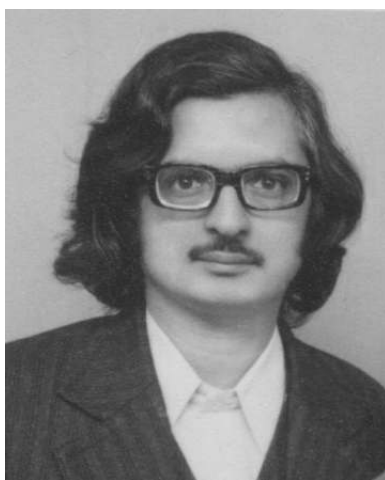


Figure 1: Shillong, 1977

After working in TIFR for about a year, I obtained the post of a lecturer in Physics in the newly created North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Meghalaya. Shillong, Meghalaya (1977-1983)

Got married in 1977 and took up a lecturer-ship here. Very nice place.

Liked it a lot. Had fun ordering books and equipment and designing new courses and labs for the new Physics department in the new university. Published lots of papers, which gave stomach-ache to some of my colleagues. Decided to leave in 1981 and left in 1983 for TIFR again. Jaideep was born there.

Waterloo, Ontario (1983-1987)

Raj Kumar Pathria stepped in to change the course of my life a second time. He had an opening for a post-doc and I accepted. Lived in the Married Students Apartments. Lots of Indians there and they all had multi-system TVs and VCRs bought from Jackson Heights, New York. Rajdeep was born there.

Worked very hard and wanted to return to TIFR. Some fishy business happened (I am not the only one; others report similar experiences with TIFR; details later; watch this space!). So, went to the Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX, US instead. [Here, Professor Pathria helped me to get the job without lifting a finger!]

Lubbock, TX (1987-1998)



Figure 2: Lubbock, TX, 1996

My boss in Lubbock, Professor Wilse Robinson was a very famous Physical Chemist and he had former students and post-docs everywhere. He spent about 20 years at Caltech! I was happy to help him in his

laboratory building theories for what they did. Learned about PCs and UNIX. Found out about India News by email and RMIM. Lived close to campus on 10th street. Jaideep went to Lubbock High, the same school where the Rock Legend Buddy Holly went to school.

Jaideep got a full scholarship to study at Caltech, Pasadena, CA. We visited him a few times. After two years, we decided to move to California.

San Diego, CA (1998-2019)

Raj Kumar Pathria changed my life for the fourth time. When I mentioned to him our desire to move to California, Professor Pathria suggested that I talk to his son. I did and I joined HNC Software in San Diego. The company was later bought by Fair, Isaac, now called FICO. I am retired from their in 2014.

Jaideep finished his Ph D, got married, had a son and got a job at the Michigan State University, so we moved there.

Lansing, MI (2019-)

Moved here in 2019 to be near my grandson Benjamin. His dad Jaideep Singh is a Professor at nearby Michigan State University. We lived in Delta Township until May 2023 then moved to East Lansing, not too far away from where Benjamin, Jaideep and Libby live.

Schools I attended

Some Elementary School, Kaithal, Haryana (1952)

mai.n bataa_uu.N jii?

Before entering the educational system, I could read English and Hindi, thanks to my mother. The only thing I remember from this (my first) school is the following incident. The teaching was in Hindi. Whenever a teacher asked a question, many hands were raised and they all said, mai.n bataa_uu.N jii? In Panjabi, bataa_uu.N means brinjal or eggplant. So, to me the statement came out as, I am an eggplant, Sir? I always thought it was funny, always laughed and always got thrown out of class. Many of my classmates were refugees from the Jhang-Maghiana area of Pakistan, i.e. jhaangiis.

Three Nobel Laureates

When the refugees showed up, we typically made fun of them. They would do anything to make a buck. I remember one, who used to yell, "aanaa hik te kele chaar", selling bananas at the rate of four for one aanaa (1/16 of a Rupee). He did not care as long as we bought bananas! In fact, these jhaangiis were extremely smart and settled down rather quickly in East Panjab. Just compare them with the poor refugees who came from East Bengal or the infamous UPwallas in Pakistan.

I will soon get back to the Nobel Laureates; just one more story. In a gathering of scientists in Bombay, everybody was making fun of Panjabis and Sikhs, in particular. I, being a "true" Sikh, joined in the fun, as usual. Then a high quality Brahmin from Hardoi, UP, wondered aloud, "Whom do Sikhs make fun of when they gather?" I immediately said, bhaiyaas, UP bhaiyaas. Shuklajii is a dear friend of mine and he did not mind. I told him later that I was ready for any victim. If a Bengali would have asked the same question, I would have said Bengalis without hesitation.

Coming back to jhaangiis, did you know that there are 2 jhaangii Nobel Laureates? Abdus Salam and Hargobind Khorana. I am proud to have been born (in Daskaa) within 100 miles of the birth-places of three Nobel Prize winners. The third one is, of course, my hero, Chandra.

Shri Atmanand Jain Primary School, Maler Kotla, Panjab (1952-1956)

Village banaam city

Most of my friends went to the school run by the Municipal Corporation. I went here because my father and his two brothers had gone there. There was one teacher, paNDit raadhaa kishan, who had taught all three of them and then taught me! We used to have fun Fridays in which people sang filmi songs. One is stuck in my mind, ai dil mujhe bataa de tuu kis pe aa gayaa hai. The earliest memories are songs from Awara, Barsaat, Badi Behan etc. This was a city school and all the village boys like me were put in Section B, whereas all the city boys, supposedly smarter, were put in Section A. Another interesting thing. Section A learned Hindi first and then Panjabi (from grade 3) and then English (from grade 6). We were taught Panjabi first, then Hindi and then English. Of course, I always obtained the highest marks in my Section and was almost as good as the guys in Section A.

I learn Urdu

By the end of 5th grade, I could read and write Hindi, Panjabi and English quite well. Our house was full of books on every imaginable subject. I read all of them from cover to cover, including the copyright notices and publication information! My father used to subscribe to Sangeet, a magazine devoted to articles and news, published by kaakaa haatharasii (prabhulaal garg). He also subscribed to (now defunct) "Dharamayug". Devoured it. My uncle used to get an Urdu magazine called "Khilona", published by Idriis Dehalavii, the shama-shushmaa publications guy. In order to read that, I learned Urdu.

Books can be wrong

Couple of incidents remain stuck in memory. In one lengthy but not difficult mathematics problem involving simple and compound interests over varying periods, the answer in the back of the book did not agree with what I had obtained. I tried very hard to find my mistake. Finally, I asked the brightest city boy and he calmly declared that the book was wrong! It was a revelation that printed word can be wrong. [Skepticism](#) started. Recently, a classmate of mine from the Jain school days, Shri Maharani Goya 'found' me and we renewed our friendship by recalling the old days from 1954-1957. He reminded me the name of this bright fellow, to whom I am forever indebted. His name is Kewal Krishan.

Village banaam city, part II

In the second incident, I beat all the city boys and everybody else in grade 6 by obtaining the highest marks ever. My village friends took me on their shoulders and carried me all the way back to my village, about 2 miles away. It was just like Hockey or Cricket, I tell you.

Khalsa National Higher Secondary School, Ludhiana, Panjab (1956-1963)

This is where I got spoiled.



*Figure 3: High School,
1963*

The classes were too boring. I was far ahead of everybody including the teachers. I got addicted to watching Hindi movies without telling my parents. Where did the money come from? I taught tuitions. How did I get away? Told the teachers I had some work at home. Since I was very dependable, hard-working and class monitor, they never doubted me. When did I see the movies? Watched shows during school hours and returned home along with my fellow students. How did I buy tickets? That was the tough part. The lower stall (no chance of running into known grownups) was very crowded and there was always a lot of dhakka mukki. I was very frail and thin.

Hands thrust into the ticket window

So, I found some friends, sons of truck-drivers or other absentee fathers. Neither their parents nor the teachers cared what they did or where they were. I taught them English and Mathematics for free and they bought the tickets in a jiffy by muscling into crowded lines and by forcing their hands into the ticket window! Saw movies like haatim taaii, dil deke dekho, anaa.Dii, milan, dhuul kaa phuul, baaziigar, superman kii vaapasii. Later, when I was married (1978), I told my father that I used to run away from school to see pictures. He said that everybody knew and they did not care. The reason is that I was perhaps the only student anybody had known who

would thoroughly study every single course book and solve every single mathematics problem before the beginning of the school year without any help from anybody! Yes, I was one of those.

Colleges attended by Surjit Singh

Government College, Ludhiana (1963-1966)

Did good, won awards

I had stood first in the Ludhiana District in 9, 10 and 11 grades; so people knew me. This college had a reputation of producing first class first students in the Panjab University. So people from other cities had come to learn. In the first year examination, I stood first in the Panjab University by obtaining record marks. At this point, the students who were in the next 4 or 5 positions quit the Panjab university and went to other universities! One fellow called Hari Kishan Sahajwani went to the newly-formed Haryana University and stood first in that university in years 2 and 3. I took Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics and English. I also took Honors in Mathematics. Won lots of books in the annual prize ceremonies. Of course, I stood first in the university in all the examinations and obtained University Medals. I was also given Pandit Hem Raj Medal for standing first in the Math. Honors examination.

Saw movies

I taught lots of tuitions and saw lots of movies, typically Shammi Kapoor and Dev Anand. Once I saw leader (1964) with Dilip Kumar, I became his fan.

Copying incident

I usually wrote very fast and finished the examinations way earlier than everybody else. A funny thing happened once. In one calculus examination I had to prove a theorem. It was an unseen problem and I somehow proved it. The fellow next to me copied. I realized later that I used circular reasoning and had merely assumed what I wanted to prove. I crossed out everything and re-did it correctly. The fellow complained to the teacher by saying that Surjit Singh got full marks for that problem whereas he got zero for the same solution. I showed him what I had done and he never spoke to me again!



*Figure 4: College Central
Association Group photo, 1965*

The Central Association was a nominated body made from the brightest students from academics, sports etc.

Panjab University, Chandigarh (1966-1969)

Physics or Maths

Got admitted both in Physics and in Mathematics; decided to go for Physics, because the fate of theories rests on experiments, whereas Mathematics seemed like a mental game. There were two ways to come to the Physics department. One was my way, do a three-year degree course from an affiliated college and get a B.Sc. degree and come to M. Sc. The other was to join the Physics department after grade 11 and join the Physics Honors Program. So in my M. Sc. First year class, there were people who have been in the Physics department since 1963. I stayed in hostel (Bhatanagar Hall), first time away from home. Quickly made some good friends, the closest was Dr. Avinash Julka, then an Economics student. In Physics, we had many US-returned teachers who taught from books used in US universities.

Fascination with Hindi

I somehow became fascinated with science in Hindi and even learned all the technical terms in Hindi from a Dictionary published by the Govt. of India. The Classical Mechanics teacher (S. K. Tuli) taught from Goldstein and I took notes in Hindi! I wish I could find my old note-book.

VC's son

Vice Chancellor was a Haryana Jat and his son, Vimal Kumar Chaudhary, a very bright fellow, was my classmate. People laid down bets as

to who would stand first, him or me. I did in both years of M. Sc.

I lost a chess competition

An interesting thing happened. Usually people think that if you are bright in one area you must be brilliant in everything. So these chess club guys wanted me to enter in the class chess competition. I told them I did not know how to play chess. They did not believe me at all saying that I just wanted to avoid playing to devote more time to my studies. I tried very hard to explain. Did not work. So, I entered the competition and learned the basics from my dear friend, Avinash Julka. In the very first match, after about 10 moves, I got into a hopeless situation and then my opponent, R. K. Bansal noticed that my bishops and horses were in very inconsistent positions! It turns out that I had made a mistake in the initial setup by putting the bishops next to the rooks and nobody noticed. I lost the competition miserably. My supporters and even R. K. Bansal insisted that I lost purposely so that I could devote more time to my studies. Bansal teaches in a Delhi college now. Years later I met him and told him again that I did not know how to play chess at all. I definitely made his day because he believed me this time!

Enter Pathria

I did my Master's thesis in Nuclear Physics under P. N. Trehan and was all set for a career in the Panjab University as a Lecturer, Reader and Professor etc. when Raj Kumar Pathria (after post-docking abroad) joined our department as the youngest Professor in the university. I went to his lectures as an attendee and was completely floored. I had never been taught by anybody like him before! So clear, logical and full of enthusiasm for his subject! So, after M. Sc., I and two of my friends, R. K. Bansal (chess-wallah) and Vishwamitter Ahuja went to him and requested to be his students. He agreed. He was working on his famous Statistical Mechanics book then. My job was to learn Statistical Mechanics from the Huang (MIT-wallah) book (a standard until Pathria's book displaced it), to make suggestions for Pathria's manuscript and provide solutions for his proposed text-book. I was about a year into being a Research Fellow with him when he called all three of us into his office, shut the door and announced that he was going back and taking up a job in Canada. He offered to fix us with people in India or US. All three of us agreed to apply for TAs in US. In the end the other two decided to stay in India for personal reasons and I ended up at the University of Pittsburgh.

He generously acknowledged all three of us in his book, which became world-famous and displaced Huang's book even at MIT! This was the first time Raj Kumar Pathria changed my life. He would do it twice in the future.

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh (1969-1975)

Oranges and milk

Landed at the Pittsburgh Airport on a Friday (after stopovers at London and Frankfurt, flying by Iraqi Airways, Sadaam had just taken over!) with \$222. Took the bus to downtown and stayed at William Penn for \$22 for one night. Next morning bought and ate some oranges and bought and drank some milk. I was and still am a vegetarian (no meat, no fish, no eggs). (That may sound surprising to people who know that I am a Panjabi and a Sikh to boot. Our family was influenced by Namdharis ([see here](#)), who are strict vegetarians.) Next day moved to YMCA for \$6 a night and on Monday met the other 5 first year Indians who came to the Physics Department. One of them, Shashikant Phatak (Institute of Physics, Orissa) became my room-mate and we stayed together until he graduated in 1974.



Figure 5: PITT student ID polaroid, 1971

Condensed Matter Physics

Lots of foreign students and professors. In one Advanced Quantum Mechanics class, all the students were foreigners and the teacher was from Germany! Got straight As and passed the Comprehensive after the first

year. I became fascinated with Condensed Matter Physics, but none of the Professors had any openings. Fred Keffer asked if I could wait for one year for David Jasnow to join. I said yes and spent the year teaching, learning and watching lots of TV. Jasnow joined in Fall 1971 and he accepted me as a strident. Had fun and wrote FORTRAN programs. I told him I wanted to do Analytic work and I did half of my thesis on the Spherical model. I also used numerical techniques to find asymptotic behavior of infinite series to study critical behavior, which was a young field then. Lots of joint seminars and courses with Carnegie-Mellon University.

Doctoral Thesis of Surjit Singh

University of Pittsburgh, August 1975

Title

Critical Phenomena in Spin Systems I. Crossover Scaling Functions for Exchange Anisotropy: $n=2$ and $n=3$ models II. Studies on the Spherical Model

Subject

Theoretical Condensed Matter Physics

Advisor

Professor David Jasnow

Summary

After many false starts, crossover scaling in critical phenomena was just being understood in 1971. My thesis was an important link in solidifying the support for the ideas of Jasnow and Fisher in these matters. In fact, I have a postcard from Jasnow in which he states that Fisher told him that it was a "commendable" thesis. I am David Jasnow's first student

Back to India

After Ph. D., Jasnow wanted me do a Post-Doc in Europe or US, but I wanted to return to India. I did and got a job at TIFR. Why did I return to India? I thought that at least some bright Indians should return and help change the system in India (remember it was the Sixties!). I spent 2 years in TIFR and was extremely happy. Then took up a job in a new central university called North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong and learned in 3 years that India is a great country, only great people can live there and, finally, I am not as great as I thought!

Jobs in the Universities (1975-1998)

Visiting Research Professor 1997

Department of Physics, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Taught two physics courses

Visiting Research Associate Professor 1987-1997

SubPicosecond and Quantum Radiation Laboratory, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas

Research in the Problem of Activated Barrier Crossing and Molecular Dynamic Simulation of Water

Guided four students partly in their doctoral theses

Visiting Research Associate Professor 1983-1987

Department of Physics, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada

Research on Finite-Size Effects in Critical Phenomena

Taught two physics courses

Visiting Fellow 1975-76, 1983

Theoretical and Solid State Divisions, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, India

Assisted experimentalists in the interpretation of their data

Guided one student partly toward his Ph.D.

Taught two physics courses

Lecturer 1977-1982

Department of Physics, North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India

Full-time teaching (including laboratories) and Research, various topics

Guided many students toward their M.S. degrees

Guided one student to a Ph.D.

Served on the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies in Physics

Served on many committees including the ones for selecting new students, for organizing seminars and for interacting with the physics departments of affiliated colleges

Helped organize a Conference on Disordered Systems held in Shillong during March 1981



Figure 6: Gathering of Condensed Matter Physicists for a conference at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, 1979

Left to right: G Baskaran, Deepak Kumar, HR Krishnamurty, Unknown, Partha Bhattacharya, Sushant Dattagupta, Mustansir Barma,

Deepak Dhar, Surjit Singh, Narendra Jaggi, Narendra Kumar, VC Sahni.

DETAILS OF TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Pittsburgh

I started teaching as a Teaching Assistant in 1967 when I was in my final year of the master's degree at the Panjab University. I taught undergraduate Physics Laboratories. I continued as a Teaching Assistant at the University of Pittsburgh. There I taught Recitations and Laboratories during 1969-73.

TIFR

After getting my Ph. D. I returned to India. During 1975-76, I taught two courses at TIFR. One was a Refresher Course on the basics of Thermodynamics and Statistical Mechanics in a Summer School for college teachers. Another was a graduate course in Mathematics including Group Theory and Integral Equations.

Shillong

In 1976, I joined the NEHU as a Lecturer. This was a tenured position equivalent to that of an Assistant Professor in an American university. I taught Physics Courses and Laboratories at all levels. In the first year, I taught courses based on The Berkeley Physics Course series and the Feynman Lecture Notes series. Mathematical Physics was taught from Arfken's book. In the second year, I taught the usual advanced Physics courses including one on Special Topics in Mathematical Physics.

Waterloo

During 1983-87, at the University of Waterloo, I taught a course in Classical Mechanics based on Marion's book and another one on Solid State Physics based on Kittel's book..

Evaluation Questionnaire For The Course On Classical Mechanics At The University Of Waterloo

Item	Range	5	4	3	2	1
Oral presentation	Excellent (5) to poor (1)	7	18	15	4	1
Response to questions	Excellent (5) to poor (1)	16	21	7	1	0
Visual presentations	Excellent (5) to poor (1)	6	22	12	4	1
Teaching attitude	Enthusiastic (5) to poor (1)	28	13	4	0	0

Availability	Excellent (5) to poor (1)	12	16	7	0	0
Overall quality of teaching	Excellent (5) to poor (1)	15	19	5	1	1

Lubbock

In the spring of 1997, I taught a freshman physics course based on Physics by Giancoli and a junior course based on Statistical Physics by Reif.

LIST OF COURSES TAUGHT IN INDIA, CANADA AND US

COURSE	LEVEL
General Physics	Undergraduate
Mathematical Physics	Undergraduate to Graduate
Classical Mechanics	Undergraduate to Graduate
Electromagnetic Theory	Undergraduate to Graduate
Quantum Mechanics	Undergraduate to Graduate
Solid State Physics	Undergraduate to Graduate
Thermodynamics	Undergraduate
Statistical Physics	Undergraduate to Graduate
Laboratory	Undergraduate

DETAILS OF POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

My doctoral thesis involved numerical analysis of high-temperature series expansions in two variables, using computers, as well as analytical studies of various crossover phenomena in the spherical model. This was one of the first studies to lend support to the Fisher-Barber-Jasnow theory of crossover scaling in critical phenomena.

In my postdoctoral research, I have continued to use the twin techniques of mathematical analysis and numerical computation in applying the general methodology of statistical mechanics in many theoretical areas of chemistry and physics. These are given below roughly in chronological

order:

magnetic systems, ferroelectrics, random systems, ideal Bose gas, finite-sized systems, supersymmetric systems, activated barrier crossing (ABC) problems, and water

Apart from working on theoretical problems interesting to me, I have always collaborated with experimentalists in explaining their results theoretically. See papers 5, 6, 38, 39, 47, 51, 52, 57-59, 64, 66, 68, 71-73, 75, 76.

EXPERIENCE OF GUIDING RESEARCH

G. P. Singh

At TIFR, Bombay, I helped Mr. G. P. Singh interpret his ultrasonic attenuation data on the phase transition in RbH_2PO_4 ; see papers 5 and 6. He was awarded a Ph.D. degree by the University of Bombay in 1979.

W. L. Basaiawmoit

I guided one student to a Ph. D. degree when I was at NEHU, Shillong. Miss Wendy L. Basaiawmoit (deceased) was awarded a doctorate in 1983. Her thesis involved calculating the crossover scaling functions for the spatial anisotropy in quasi-two-dimensional Ising models; see papers 11, 12 and 15. I also guided many students to M.S. degrees at NEHU.

R. Krishnan

At Texas Tech, I helped Miss R. Krishnan with the theoretical half of her thesis. She was granted a doctoral degree in 1991. She studied the Kramers activated barrier crossing (ABC) problem using space-dependent friction. She used both the Langevin and the Hamiltonian approaches. While doing this, we discovered that the escape rate has a singular behavior which can be described as a critical phenomenon. This has opened up a completely new facet of the half century old ABC problem. Her theoretical work is described in papers 47, 49, 54-56 and 62.

M. Vedomuthu

I have also helped in guiding Mrs. M. Vedomuthu in her study of the anomalous properties of water using a novel mixture model. Her work is reported in papers 59, 64, 68, 71 and 73. She was recently awarded a Ph. D. degree.

C. H. Cho and J. Urquidi

Even more recently, Mr. Chul Hee Cho obtained a Ph. D. from Texas Tech. I helped him in his research mainly on the study of anomalous

properties of water using analytical and computational techniques. His work is reported in papers 56, 72, 75 and 76. In 2000, Mr. Jacob Urquidi obtained his Ph. D. with my guidance.

Last Job of Surjit Singh

In May 1998, I took up a job at HNC.

When my son, Jaideep got a full academic scholarship to study at Caltech and moved to Pasadena, all of us missed him. So, I applied for jobs in California. Almost got post-docs at Caltech, UCSD and at some colleges for teaching. But then I remembered Raj Kumar Pathria telling me that his son and younger daughter worked at a company in San Diego. I decided to check it out. I visited many Dilbertian cubicles and talked to many people. I was very encouraged to see that they were dressed without jackets and ties, and had books like Abramowitz and Stegun and Numerical Recipes in Fortran on their desks. They said they were doing applied mathematics to solve problems in financial fraud. I thought it might be fun, applied, got interviewed and joined. HNC makes a credit card fraud detection product, which is by far the major product used by credit card issuers to detect the use of lost/stolen credit cards all over the world.

In April 2002, the company was taken over by Fair, Isaac. This company created and sells the famous FICO score. Whenever you apply for credit (for buying a house, car or even insurance), the lenders obtain the industry standard FICO score. In fact, you can check your own FICO score and learn how to improve it at the myFICO website right now.

I retired in January 2014.

My Patent

On August 12, 2014, I was awarded a US Patent. It was a joint work with my colleagues, Dr. Prodip Hore and Dr. Scott Zoldi and was performed when I was working at FICO.

Fuzzy Tagging Method and Apparatus

Abstract

A computer-implemented method of tagging a transaction that includes tagging a transaction with one of a first tag value or a second tag value, forming a set of clusters associated with the tagged transactions having a first value, and forming a second set of clusters associated with the tagged transactions having a second value. The computer implemented method also includes determining a fuzzy tag value based on a relationship between the transaction and one of the centroids of the clusters having a first tag

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

value, and one of the centroids of the clusters having second value. The method also includes replacing the first tag value or the second tag value with the fuzzy tag value.

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VIGNETTES FROM MY LIFE

When I was studying at Govt College Ludhiana, there was this older homeless guy who used to hang around the campus. He was able to solve the toughest math problem in any branch, algebra, calculus, coordinate geometry, analysis, you name it. When in the mood, he would sing Saigal's Jab Dil Hi TooT gaya. Eventually I found out that he is the author of dozens of math help books in the style of Schaum series, you know, brief into and then solved problems. All his problems had notes like Pan U 1961, Delhi U 1959 etc. indicating the university exam in which the exact or similar problem was posed. Turns out he had made tons of money by writing these books and revising them every year by including new exam problems. Unfortunately he was so busy with this work that his wife found another man and ran away leaving him penniless!

My high school was Khalsa National High School on Shahpur Road Ludhiana. The "National" indicated that it was a congressi school as opposed to other Khalsa schools that supported the Panjabi Suba movement. Our principle was Baldev Singh Kang, a pucca congressi. I have seen him fall at the feet of Pratap Singh Kairon (Chief Minister). In any case, suddenly one week lots of crates of powdered milk showed up and they were marked USA PL 480. We could take home as many as we wanted, no limit! PL 480 was one of those Food For Peace laws signed by Eisenhower. A much better consequence of that law (for me anyway) was the money it provided to set up (and donate books for) the Panjab University Extension Library in Ludhiana. I was given a membership card to this library as a gift by my teacher Sampooran Singh, a retired fauji who taught us English. For my last year in school (grade 11), this library was my second home. They had all kinds of books from US: science, history, propaganda. I read all of Asimov's work, other similar science popularizations and lots of elementary physics introduction books. Interestingly, Soviet Embassy also contributed free magazines (Soviet Land, of course) and books. I remember reading the famous Physics for Entertainment by Perelman and a few on the Sputnik. I had already chosen the Non-Medical Science Program in grade 8, which means I was bound to study Physics, Chemistry or Mathematics or related subjects. This experience solidified my desire to become a Theoretical Physicist and so it was.

First time I heard people speak Multani (a dialect of Panjabi) was when our naukaran in Kaithal spoke to me when I was about 5 or 6. All these refugees used to live in a big camp near our house. Next was in Ludhiana

where the refugees lived in east field ganj (officially Wakefield Gunj) and some of my class fellows and teachers came from there. They spoke in Multani with one another and switched to Lahori-Amritsari with us. After a long gap, I am hearing Multani now on Dunya TV's internet broadcast. It is heartbreaking to hear all these men and women relating their plight about losing everything in the ongoing floods. Very sad.

There is story going around about Modi getting a kid a passport in 3 days. Reminds me of what happened when I wrote to a Govt official the only time in my life. I won a scholarship from Ludhiana Distt, Rs 20 a month for doing well in grade 8 (1960). Very excited when the Principal gave me the letter. it had come to school. Every month I go to the school office guy to ask, he says no, nothing happened yet. After six months, my elder uncle Amar Singh suggested that I write to the Education Minister (I think it was Mohan Lal under Kairon, Congress). So, he dictated the complaint letter and I wrote. About 2 weeks later, Principal and his office guy call me in his office. The office guy reads the letter, placing special attention to the sentence, "ho sakta hai is men mere school walon ka koi qasoor ho" [Possibly my school people are to blame for this.] Boy, they were after me. Why did you write this? Who made you do it? I told them the truth. They asked me, is your uncle a communist? He used to work as a mechanic in a sugar mill and was very active in the communist labor union and was very high up too. They had not heard of him. Just cursed him and told me never to do anything like that again. So, the Minister, instead of taking some action, sent the letter back to school! Never saw the money. College was better, I always got my national Merit Scholarship money on time without problems.

I can't believe that Galileo was my ancestor (academic)! My thesis advisor is David Jasnow and his is Michael Wortis. I knew this much and then started looking into ancestry. I lucked into phdtree.org. From there I found that ten levels up, there was Adam Sedgwick. Starting with him, at level 21 was Galileo himself! Come to think of it, he was the 'Adam' of Physics, we are all descended from him. For those curious, here is the starting point (adjust the tree height to 10).

XXX

When I saw my official birthdate on my official eighth grade form, I knew it was wrong. My grandma had told me I was born 'halliyan ton pahlan' (before the attacks). Halle (attacks, akin to hamle) is how people in those days described the 1947 Independence/Partition/Holocaust. So the year was wrong. I also knew that I was born on Maghar (Margshirsh)

Punnya (December full moon), about a month before Guru Nanak who was born on Kartik Punnya. I got a chance to determine my true birthdate when I walked to the reference desk of the main library of the University of Pittsburgh. The nice lady gave me a microfilm of an almanac by NASA or some other entity, don't remember now. I looked for the December full moon before halle. That's when I found out that I shared my birthday (December 8) with Dharminder and Sharmila Tagore! The year you ask? Following in the footsteps of Jack Benny, I have decided to be always 39.

Later I read joke/anecdote books on Akbar-Birbal, Tenali Ramkrishna and Mullah Naseeruddin. I read all the jokes in Sunday newspapers and magazines. In US, we had the magnificent Carnegie Public Library next to Pitt. There, I read all of Bennet Cerf's books, Milton Berle's huge joke book, Anthology of Jewish Humor, Legman's two-volume study of Rationale of a Dirty Joke, Mad magazine, National Lampoon, and books on scientists' humor like Stress Analysis Of an Evening Gown, Random Walk in Science, the Journal of Irreproducible Results and many others that I may be forgetting. On the Internet, I read all the Blonde jokes, Polish and other ethnic jokes, Light Bulb jokes, Sardarji jokes, you name it, I have read it.

I spent grades 7 to 11 in Khalsa School, Shahpur Road, Ludhiana, Panjab. I was always the monitor of my section and one of my jobs was to lead the morning prayers. Every section of every class had to do it; my turn came about once a month. I spoke and everybody repeated after me. It started with Jan Gan Man, the national anthem. Then one had to choose a Shabd (poem) from Gurbani, the Sikh scripture. I always chose 'kita loDiye kamm su har pe', because it had only 5 lines! It ended with ardaas, the Sikh Prayer that ends all Sikh ceremonies. I was nervous for a few times in the beginning and then it was just a chore. My real first time at public speaking came when the 10th class gave a going away party to the 11th. Nobody gave any warning. Suddenly my class teacher (Sampooran Singh Hara Chauhan) said, Surjit, say something! It is completely true that public speaking is worse than death. My legs were shaking, my knees were made of melted butter, my mouth was dry. I had watery eyes. I somehow managed to get up and mutter a few words like 'Good luck' and sat down in my chair, I was shaking for a long time. Still feel scared when I remember that.

I started carrying my own fountain pen in college. Like everybody else I put it in the right corner of my left shirt pocket. I lost lots of pens while traveling. Typically I would run into people while boarding the bus or train and in the crowd, it would get stuck in somebody's hair, shirt etc. This continued in three countries. When I started driving a car, I lost them

because the seat belt would take them away! Finally about six months ago I said "enough is enough" and started putting my pen on the other side of my shirt pocket. Have not lost one pen so far!

The only Nuclear Physics course I took in Pittsburgh was given by a Swiss Professor: Juerg X Saladin. I asked him what the X stood for. He said, oh it's nothing. When he entered the US for the first time, he told the officer that he did not have a middle name. The officer said just cross it out. Somebody who was preparing the official paperwork interpreted it as X ! I have been telling this story to my friends for more than 40 years. Well, in the latest issue of Physics Today, I read his obituary written by my class fellow Cyrus Baktash. Turns out he did have a middle name Xaver and he was pulling my leg! Cyrus adds helpfully that JXS had "a great sense of humor". But don't cry for me because I lost one a

My life has been in danger three times; I owe to three people for saving it. First, my dad (1947). About 15 million people migrated during partition and about 1 million died. But my dad saved himself, my mom and me by bringing us safely from Lahore to Ludhiana. Second, my grandmother (1955). She was alone in the village with me, her high-school going son and a her 3 year old daughter. I had typhoid fever for one month. She did not have money for a doctor. She went to an Ayurvedic vaid who gave her bottles of potion for me to drink and some stuff to reduce fever. I was in delirium the whole time. My guess is that he gave some aspirin like powder and some electrolyte filled liquid to avoid dehydration. Third is actually a group of people, my doctors at the Texas Tech Health Science Center (1996). My internal medicine doctor recognized from the symptoms that I might have heart disease. My cardiologist found that there were huge blockages. My surgeon patched new pathways.

On June 25, 1975, I was traveling by train from Ludhiana to Bombay to take up my first job in the Theoretical Physics Department at TIFR. I lived there for about 2 years in a hostel. Every morning, under my door, I found a two-sheet 4-page summary of the atrocities committed during the Emergency all over India. No idea who printed or distributed it.

I wanted to change my Facebook name to Professor Surjit Singh. They allowed it in my nickname but not in any part of the Facebook name. So I used the Hindi version of Professor (Pradhyapak). Thanks to another Surjit Singh for teaching me how.

With respect to Hindi films, there have been 4 life-changing events for me. First one was the discovery (I was in grade 8) that I could make some

excuse to the teacher, skip school, see the matinee show, and return home with my class fellows. I was very scared at first, but nothing happened! I have been crazy about Hindi films since.

This really happened to me. I had joined as a Visiting Research Associate Professor (which is a fancy way of saying that I was a post-doc who also taught courses) at Texas Tech, Lubbock. I did theory and wrote programs in FORTRAN. My boss said he had heard that Pascal was better and I should learn that. Luckily there was a sale and I bought Turbo Pascal for \$1. I liked it, registered it and wrote a letter to the software publisher that I wanted to upgrade to the latest version and they should advise me about what to do. They never replied. I forgot all about it and my boss said FORTRAN is good enough for us, anyway. About a year later, I got a letter from Phillip Kahn, the CEO, that he was happy to have me as a customer and would I like to upgrade. In reply I wrote a long letter of complaint (on the University Letterhead) explaining how I had written to them earlier and they never replied etc. Soon after, one fine day, a trembling female voice called and asked for Professor Surjit Singh. [Two postdocs were sharing a room and a phone.] She said that she was the private secretary to Kahn and said that he profoundly apologized on behalf of the whole company and she offered to send me free of charge the next upgrade. I said I lost interest in Pascal and would she send me a copy of Quattro Pro instead. She sent it by the fastest method and that's how I learned Microsoft Excel :) Note; Many of my friends call me trouble-maker and they run away when they see a twinkle forming.

I was in TIFR for about 2 years (1975-76), then every Jan 15 to Feb 15 for collaborations and then again from Feb 83 to Oct 83. Let me share some stuff from TIFR. Everybody had read Wodehouse and talked about it. All were incorrigible punsters. A. There is no sign of trains here. B. Must be a multiple of pi. When playing carrom in the hostel when somebody made a good shot. There was a famous Nuclear Physicist Dr K K Gupta; everybody called him KKG. I was new there, so one person suggested, KKG seems not be feeling well, go ask him. I walk up to him. KKG (emphatically): No, I am not OK, I am KK. OK is my brother who is a medical doctor in New York!. He told lots of stories about OK, but with a twinkle in his eye so nobody was sure. Anyway he joined as a Professor and I as a Lecturer in Shillong. We became very good friends. I asked him and the mystery was finally solved. Yes, Dr OK Gupta, his brother, really was a doctor in New York :) Finally the story of BA, MA and not-PhD. Dr Bharat A Ratnam did his PhD in US and joined TIFR. Everybody called him BA). There was a girl called Mala working in the TIFR library. He fell in love with her. She didn't care. He wooed and pursued her for over a year.

She gave up and they got married. She took the name MA Ratnam. (People started calling her MA). Rest of the story was told to me by my friend Dr. Yaddanpudi Sri Trivikram Rao [He used to say that his name was also his postal address, because there is only one village Yaddanpudi in the whole world, and, although there are many Sri Trivikram Raos there, he is the only Dr!]. BA and MA had a daughter. Dr YST Rao told me that he pestered them for a long time to name their daughter Philomena Daniella so that she could be called PhD, they vehemently refused. So sad.

I hope my friends from TIFR and NEHU can endure another KKG post. Repost mainly for Rao yst. Professor K K Gupta (a Panjabi who grew up in Shimla) was like a father to me. We liked each other very much. Like all theoretical physicists he had many annoying habits. As far as I know, he never laughed except for one time [see below]. He may have smiled. Let us say a person A told a joke or an a

There are lots of fans of lots of Hindi film personalities. I am a huge fan of Kundan Lal Saigal and Noor Jehan and anybody associated with them. Most fans are routine fans, you know, they like Lata songs or Helen dances. But some are super-duper-fanatic. As examples, we have fans of RDBurman, ARRehman, KishoreKumar etc. But the toppers are Rafi fans :) Long ago Raju Bhartan, I think, wrote somewhere that Lata has sung 20,000 songs. The World Record book picket up the news item and put her in their book. Of course, the readers of Hindi Film Geet Kosh knew that that was not true. Actually even in Hindi films, Asha beat her! It was pointed out to them. So the record book removed Lata and after some time put in Asha. But Rafi fans were are furious! They claim that he sang 25,000 songs at least. About 12 years ago, I got tired of arguing with them and said this. Look at Hindi Film Geet Kosh and 3 books published on Rafi. For each new song you find I will give you \$10! In the last 12 years 3 people have found 3 songs and I gave them the reward. Yesterday I myself found 2 new songs of Rafi not listed anywhere. They are from Ganga Maiya 1955 and are available on my website. They are numbered 05 and 06. For discovering these 2 Rafi songs, I gave myself a reward of \$20! [I plan to buy some headache tablets with the money; I am going to need them :)]

This is how the third life-changing event, as far as Hindi films are concerned, happened to me. The year was 1989. I was in Lubbock, TX, teaching and doing research, story of my life. I subscribed to India Abroad, a weekly from New York. In the latest issue they had many articles celebrating Lata completing 60 years. Of course, they mentioned the infamous 25,000 number. I immediately shot a letter to the editor (actual letter, hand written, real postage stamps) writing about Har Mandir Singh

and his monumental Hindi Film Geet Kosh and informing them that the number of songs in Hindi films is about 5,100 up to 1980. I gave Har Mandir's address. They published my letter, but removed Har Mandir's address. My name and city was mentioned. My phone number was easily available from information. I received dozens of calls from people all over the US. All of them wanted to buy the Geet Kosh volumes. I became unofficial US ambassador to Har Mandir! One caller talked about his likes and dislikes. He liked mostly 30s and 40s films and music. He was a huge fan of Saigal, Kanan, and Naushad. He mentioned that he hated R D Burman with passion declaring that RDB was single-handedly responsible for the utter decline in the quality of Hindi film music! I told him that I didn't hate R D Burman but didn't like him much either. I also told him that I was a fan of 30s and 40s films and music too. Then he casually asked if I had songs and films of Saigal, Noor Jehan and Naushad. I told him that I had some songs but no videos of Saigal and Noor Jehan films. He said that he had many films of Saigal, Kanan and Noor Jehan and lots of songs from the 30s and 40s. Not only that, he had many friends who had even more videos and songs. Would I like to have copies of these things? I was so shocked and overwhelmed by this information that I could barely say yes and give him my address. Of course, in due course, he and his friends sent me copies of everything they had. And later, when I started my website, I put all those song collections on my website. This is how my music, video, book, and magazine collection got a much-needed boost. Of course, many people downloaded those songs and as a gratitude, they wanted to send me their and their friends' collections. You can see their names strewn all over my website. That guy is my BFF, Dr. Manohar Lal Kapur. Look for him on my website, under the category My Friends to learn more.

Very early 80s, I was at the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong, India, with my wife and a 2-year old son. Teaching Physics and doing research, as usual. Listening to Radio Ceylon and taping songs on the National Panasonic 2-in-1 (gifted to me by my father-in-law, late Shri Gulab Singh). Sometimes I could not hear the name of the film or the lyrics properly and was left wondering about it. Why does not anybody write a book about these things? Also listening to American Forces Radio Network and keeping in touch with the events in the US. I also subscribed to the Madhuri Magazine. It had many interesting articles on old films, actors, music directors etc. In one issue, they had a half-page note about this guy from Kanpur. He had apparently worked hard for almost a decade to collect information from film booklets, record catalogs, song books, magazines, other books and his own listening notes. He had visited dozens of towns to meet people, filmi and non-filmi, to collect even more information. Now he had published a book called Hindi Film Geet Kosh

(Khand 3) in Hindi. I wondered if he had really published the book and if so, how did I miss the first two volumes. Luckily they gave his postal address. I immediately shot off a post-card (Google it!) asking him if the book had really been published and how I might obtain it. After a few days, I came home for lunch and my wife informed me that the postman left a slip. It said that I had a parcel and should go to the post office to pick that up. Finished lunch quickly and went to the line at the post office. The guy said I had a VPP, no idea what that meant. Found out that it meant a Value Payable Parcel and I had to pay Rs 40 to get it. Paid, opened, saw Khand 3! Didn't want to go to work, but had a lab to teach. In the evening I flew home from the Bijni House (Physics Dept) to Bani Villa on R K Mission Road in Laitumkhrah. It was an amazing book, full of information about Hindi films 1951-1960. Beautifully laid out, with Appendices and Footnotes, it could easily have been his PhD thesis! For the next three days, I was in a daze. Of course, I ate, slept, taught courses and labs. But the lists of actors, songs, record numbers, footnotes were dancing in front of my eyes. This was the second film-related event that changed my life forever for the better. The guy who produced that book is Har Mandir Singh Hamraaz, at that time a bank clerk and a young man of less than 30. And he did it without any financial help from any private or Govt agency or any publishers. He has written many books now, and, despite the fact that they are all self-published, almost 20 universities on US have copies in their libraries! His books are justifiably the veritable Gold Standard for the information they contain.

So, I showed up at the Physics building of the Panjab University, Chandigarh 50 years ago in the summer of 1966. I had the National Merit Scholarship and some money saved from tutoring, which I thought would help me for another two years when I finish my Masters. Of course, at that level nobody needs tutoring and I had no idea how to find younger pupils. My dad had declared after High School that he had no money for my higher education ambitions. Anyway, I joined the Hostel Number 3 and paid for the first month's room and board. As luck would have it, my next door neighbor was Abnash Julka, who had been there for a while pursuing a degree in Economics. He found out that I am the First Class First student who had stood First in the University for three years continuously and had won 3 Medals! He immediately took me to the Hostel Warden's office and, while I stood there shyly, gave a huge lecture to him and saying that if our system could not support a deserving but poor student like Surjit Singh, it is not worth a dime! Right there and then the Warden passed orders that I would stay in the Hostel completely free of charge as long as I remained a student at the University.. And then he took us to the kitchen and ordered the Food Contractor to provide me any and all food completely free of

charge as long I was a resident at the Hostel. Abnash finished his PhD in Economics under Drs O.P.Bagai and R.N. Soni and went on to become the Chairman of the Economics Dept and an important Govt adviser. The Warden was Prof Vishwanath Tiwari, who held the Guru Nanak Chair and held Urdu poetry readings every year. Sadly, he was shot dead during the height of the Panjab insurgency. He was a pucca Congresswallah and was a member of the Rajya Sabha. The Delhi politician Manish Tiwari is his son. I must have seen him as a kid when I visited their home a few times. I remember such incidents whenever the world seems to be going down the cosmic drain :)

At our home we used to get Saaptaahik Hindustaan and Dharmayug, also Khilaunaa. The last one was in Urdu. I asked my uncle Shri Om Prakash Rahi Jamalपुरी to teach me Urdu. He bought a qaayadaa (no AI) and taught me. I was in fourth grade. In sixth grade, my father, who had been away in Bihar being a sub-contractor of projects in Dehri-on-Sone, returned. He came back with a book called Hindi Bangla Siksha. So I learned Bengali. We moved to Ludhiana. When I was in ninth grade, my father's mother's brother, Pyare Lal Kalsi, returned from being a wood worker in Daar-es-salaam, TT BEA. In his house he had every single issue of Kalyan. Of course, I read them all! He also had a Gujarati primer; so I learned Gujarati. He said that there were so many Gujaratis there that he decided to learn the language. [Side Story: Around the same time I heard that a relative of mine, living in another part of the city, had all 24 volumes of Chandrakanta. So, I spent most of my summer vacation reading all of it. Also a book-magazine loaning kiosk opened up near our school. He had Manohar Kahaniyan, Manorama, Jasoosi Duniya etc. I read them all. Jasoosi Duniya used to come first in Urdu, then a month later, he would get the Hindi version. I read the Urdu one and when the Hindi one came, amazed my friends by correctly 'guessing' the solution of the mystery, every time. End of Side Story.] Our MS class went on a tour of South India from Chandigarh to Hyderabad, Madras, Mysore, Banaglore, Madurai, Cochin, Trivendrum, and Rameshwaram etc. Of course, I bought books like Learn Tamil in 30 Days. learned all four of them. For more than 5 years my room mate in Pittsburgh was Dr Shashikant Phatak. learned Marathi from him. Sadly, due to lack of practice and time, I am a beginner to intermediate in most of these scripts, can understand a bit of the North Indian languages, South Indian not so much. Fairly proficient in Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, and English, though.

I grew up in a small village from the Punjab about which people often say that the only culture they know is agriculture. I learned many cultural lessons along the way. Three are worth mentioning. 1. I was in the 9th

grade. As usual in the morning assembly, the whole school joined in the recital of a Gurbani shabad (Sikh devotional) led by one of the class monitors, followed by the National Anthem Jan Gan Man, ending with the Sikh prayer, ardaas. As I was walking to my classroom, the Principal Baldev Singh Kang grabbed my arm and said, bewaqoof, bush-shirt naaL pajaamaa paaye, jaa ghar jaa, yaa kameez ya pant paake aa (You idiot, tee-shirt (Western) does not go with pajama (Eastern), go home and change into an Indian shirt or a pant). When I went home, all my aunts were making fun of me because I had never been sent home from school before. Never forgot that but still don't know which shirt goes with which pant. If I make a mistake, my wife shouts at me and makes me change. 2. I had a friend Kanti Mohan Sareen from Govt College, Ludhiana, who moved to Ropar and joined an Engineering college. I went to Chandigarh and joined the Physics program. Every few weeks I used to visit him to help him with his homework, spend a night and return. The very first time I visited, I had to go to the bathroom. I asked him and he pointed. I started walking when his father Tara Chand Sareen, the manager of the State Bank of Patiala branch, said, kithe jaa rahe ho? (Where are you going?) I said, bathroom. He said, kuchh aqal karo, pant naal bathroom jaaonge, Kanti, inhaanoon pajaamaa liaa ke deo. (Have some sense, you will go to bathroom in pants? Kanti, give him a pajaamaa.) I never understood why it was important, so only when I visited them I asked for a pajama. Otherwise, I do as I please. 3. When Professor Pathria was in Chandigarh, once he had a tea party and invited many people including his students. He carried a plateful of apples and was offering his guests. When he came to me I moved my hand as if I was pondering a chess move in order to select an apple. He smiled and kept shaking the plate so that I could not. Finally he said, Surjit Singh kee karade o, seb kiven laiNaa chaahedaai eh vee pataa naheen? (What are you doing? Don't you how to take what is offered?). I said, naheen jee kiven? (No, sir, how?). He said, jehaDaa sab ton neDe hove oh laiNaa zarooree hundai. (You are supposed to take the one nearest to you and not hold up the line.) I thanked him and I always followed this rule, unless I am at my home, where I am supposedly the king of the castle, supposedly.

Professor R K Pathria has changed the course of my life (really changed, not just nudged) 4 times, one time even without his knowledge. In addition to that I learned a lot from him. Here is one of the first life-long lessons. When I was doing my Master's degree, one of the requirements was to give a colloquium. It was during the final year. I prepared a lecture on the Heisenberg's Principle, prepared by reading his own article in the Scientific American. I did well and even handled the questions nicely. After I finished, Professor Pathria asked him to come with me to his office. He closed the door and said thus as I listened attentively: Generally a good presentation

but you made three big mistakes. You were never looking at the audience. You were looking on the ceiling, the ground, the walls and the windows. It is a good idea to find a few people in the front two rows and make eye contact with them and talk to them. Secondly, when you were writing on the board, you were hiding the writing with your body and speaking into the board. He got up and demonstrated how to stand at an angle, write quickly and then use an extended arm or a pointer to explain what you have written. Thirdly, he said, you were writing all over the place and erasing without thinking. You should always write from left to right and top to bottom, just like in a notebook. And, specially when you are teaching, do not erase pre-maturely, make sure the people who are taking notes are all done! As I said, these were life-long lessons, I have always followed them. There was one more thing that he did not teach me, humor. He never uses humor and jokes in his lectures, his lectures are always, clear, clean, crisp but dry. I learned by watching others that humor is very essential and have always included it in my presentations. In teaching regular classes, right about at half time, I usually stop, smile, summarize the lecture to that point and then blend in a joke, anecdote or a bunch of witty remarks, before continuing. I asked Pathria about this. He said he did not like people telling jokes because the jokes are the same year after year. I retorted that the students are new and they may not have heard them before!

How my BFF (Dr Manohar Lal Kapur) bought two drugs for Lata. He with his wife and two daughters went to see the famous Lata concert at the Kennedy Center held on September 12, 1980. He stayed at the (in)famous Watergate Hotel. While he was in the corridor, he heard harmonium sounds and faint singing. His curiosity aroused, he went to the room and found the door ajar. Not getting any response after knocking he gingerly opened the door and saw a balding man with an undershirt, sitting on the floor playing harmonium. He asked, You seem like a musician, have you come to see the Lata concert? The guy replied, I am Mr Manna Dey and I will perform in that concert! They talked for a while. Manna Dey was very impressed with my friend's knowledge of his songs and my friend was surprised to know that Manna Dey did not know much about his own early songs. Next morning, after the concert, the family went for breakfast and saw Manna Dey sitting alone. He invited them to sit with him. He was asking the waiter to bring Corn Flakes and he did not understand. My friend intervened and asked the waiter to bring some cereal and milk. He also expressed his earnest desire to meet Lata. Manna Dey said that she was staying there too and after eating he would take them all to her room. When they entered Lata's room they saw Usha Mangeshkar sitting there and Lata talking on the phone. They could not hear the other side but pieced together the following info. She asked the front desk to connect her to the nearest Days Inn. Then

she was asking the Days Inn front desk to connect her to one of the guests, presumably some musician from her party. She then asked this person to locate and contact a local doctor whom she had met. It looked as if she did not like what she heard. My friend jumped in and asked her what the problem was. She said she went to the pharmacy downstairs and they refused to give her two drugs without a prescription. Her plane was leaving later in the afternoon and she needed those medicines. My friend asked her which ones she needed and said that he would be back shortly. He went to the pharmacy and asked for the drugs. They asked him about the prescription. He said he was a practicing physician in Virginia and showed them his license. He got the drugs and went back to Lata. He mentioned to her that one of the drugs is a very strong antibiotic for throat and has huge side-effects like nausea and vomiting. She said that she has been taking it for a while and nothing had happened to her. He, being a big fan of Naushad, asked her why she sang only one Naushad song in the concert. She said in her ever so sweet voice, *kyaa karen, sab ko Khush karanaa paDataa hai* (What to do, one has to make everyone happy). My BFF, of course is Dr Manohar Lal Kapur of Suffolk, Virginia. I enclose a page from the concert brochure with three autographs.

How a Simple Request changed my life or How Professor Raj Kumar Pathria got me a job without Lifting a Finger! When I decided to quit my tenured position at the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU), Shillong, India, I wrote to all my friends. Prof Vijayaraghavan, Chairman of the Experimental Solid State Group at TIFR, Bombay, replied first. He said don't quit, get a paid one year study leave at the end of which he would give me a permanent job. I joined his group in January 1983. [In Feb my first Phys Rev Lett paper got accepted, more later.] Around June, Pathria wrote that he had a vacancy and I could join his group at the University of Waterloo, Canada in September. I talked to Vijayaraghvan about it. He said sure go, and that he would give me a permanent job whenever I returned to India. I joined Pathria's group in October 1983. I stayed there for 4 years and we published 24 papers together. After about 3 and a half years I wrote to Vijayaraghavan. He offered me a (permanent) Fellowship, something they give to people who just finished their doctorate. He also mentioned that he would promote me after one year. I wrote to him that having spent 12 years after doctorate and having published 43 papers (including 5 Phys Rev Lett papers), I deserved at least one promotion, if not two. [I did not want to go based on just a promise because I knew of two cases where TIFR made promises that they did not keep and also what happened to me in NEHU, more later.] While these negotiations were going on, I received a paper preprint request for some of my papers from Professor G Wilse Robinson, a Physical Chemist at the Texas Tech University, Lubbock, US. I

sent copies of the papers and I also made a Simple Request: I am looking for a job, do you have an opening in your group? He replied with copies of his papers and a 2 page letter describing his idea of applying the two-dimensional Ising model to some properties of water and asked my opinion about it. I wrote a 3 page reply giving him my ideas and informing him that lots of information about Ising and other magnetic models is already available for his use. Within a week, I received an appointment letter and an application form for a J-1 Visa! This is a bad visa, you have to deal with Indians back home, and not the good kind, and you must leave the USA after 2 years. I called his office. He was not there but I talked to his office manager Cheryl. She said, no problem. She sent me the H-1 forms. I joined his group in October 1987 on an H-1 visa, got a green card, and stayed there for almost 11 years. When I got the offer I asked Pathria if he had anything to do with it. He said no, nothing. So Robinson never interviewed me, never asked for any recommendation letters, never talked to Pathria. Hired me. Why? After about a year when Robinson and I became good friends, I asked him about it. He said (paraphrasing) //I am working on understanding all the properties of water. Last year in a conference I heard that Ising model may be useful for this. I had never head about this model. I asked my friend Prof Rice of the Univ of Chicago. He said read Pathria's book, it has the best treatment. I bought the book, I liked it very much and then I found out that most Physics Depts use it as a textbook. So when you asked me for a job, I said to myself, Pathria is great, this guy has published so many good papers with him, and he gave a very good reply to my questions, I will hire him!// That evening I called up Pathria from Lubbock, and told him the story. He said, wow, I got you a job without even Lifting a Finger! I said, no, you wrote a best selling textbook and you hired a great post-doc. We laughed heartily. And despite what happened on Tuesday, US is a great country and I am very happy that I decided to stay and become a citizen.

I had reasonable weight when we moved to San Diego in 1998. Then I started gaining about a pound per year. So about 10 years ago my doctor says I have Type 2 diabetes, let us add some Metformin. I started taking that. But weight kept going up and the dose kept increasing. Sugar levels kept rising. So about 6 months ago, he added one more medicine. Instead this is what I did. I went on a diet! The plan was simple. Just ate everything I was eating but reduced the amount to 75%. No change in exercise. That's it. In 3 months, I lost 20 pounds and tests showed that the sugar levels were much better. My doctor was very happy and reduced the Metformin dose to half and asked me to throw away the 'new' medicine. It did improve cholesterol levels too. Sadly no effect on blood pressure.

If you type "Ising Model" in Google, you get half a million hits. This is a theoretical model for magnetism, studies and extensions of which has revolutionized Physics and has led to many Nobels. One time my friend Prabodh Shukla ran into Ernst Ising himself! This is the story, "It happened a long time ago in early seventies....at a roadside viewpoint somewhere in upstate NY. An elderly man asked a young man in his twenties, what do you do? PhD...what problem? theory of magnetism. He told he had done the same about 50 years ago but could not follow it up after that. Now he was teaching in a High School. He was Ernst Ising...very modest and quite unaware of his fame! In retrospect, it is understandable. It was his professor's model (Lenz) that he solved in 1d in 1925. It became famous as Ising model only after Onsager solved it in 2d in 1944. I don't think Ising published any other research paper in his life. Interestingly he was born May 10, 1900 and died May 11, 1998 a day after celebrating his 98th birthday. I happened to be teaching Ising model on May 10 this year, mentioned it to my class and they seemed very amused so I am sharing the same with you."

Even though I had corresponded with Hamraaz for a long time, I finally met him in July 2000 in Dehradun where he was presented with the UP Ratan Award, the highest civilian honor of the state govt. There I also met Dr Rk Verma, who gave me a copy of his famous book on Silent Films. Recently we discovered each other on Facebook. He has now written a book on the brave people of the Indian National Army. Here are some photos. Please contact him for buying the book.

In our village (Jamalpura, Malerkotla) the addresses were simple. Ours was Mr so and so c/o Babu Mansaram Bhamra, V. P. O. Jamalpura, Malerkotla. That was my grandfather, a storekeeper/clerk in the railways in Ajmer. He was always called Babuji or Baooji because of that. The trouble was there were other Mansarams and mail got mis-delivered often. But everybody knew everybody, so the mail was eventually received and all was OK. When I finished college, I was expecting many important letters (from US universities, the US embassy etc.) and did not want my mail to get lost. What to do? I had seen a metal plate out side on the door of our house and I remember it was put there in the early 50s, probably during the census or the election time. It said B 165/16. So I changed my address to Eventually my grandfather's name got dropped. That remained my permanent address until my father moved to Assamwali bhua's mansion in Khanna. Same problem there. The address they used was Now, the G T Road (the one from Peshawar to Calcutta!) runs through the middle of the town and there must be another Late Jiwan Singh surely. So I started using, as my new permanent address, I found that number on the door and added the Water

Tanki just to be sure. This water tanki is just behind the house. There was another one on the other edge of the town. My mail was always properly delivered from all over the world. I am not sure what address my cousins and their children who live there now, are using. Perhaps back to Late Jiwan Singh ? :)

Last year, we went to see Benjamin (my grandson) when he was about a week old. We helped out, e.g. by buying groceries. I got 2 surprises. 1. This sign reads 'about 15' items. In San Diego, it is 15 items or less. Now some nervous people count again and again to make sure that they have less than or equal to 15 items. I am not one of those. I know my wife will be happy if I have, Aaloo, Pyaaz, TamaaTar (Potatoes, Onions, Tomatos), and, Lasan, Adarak, Mirchi (Garlic, Ginger, Chili Peppers). If there are more, I just ask them to throw away anything except these six. 2. In San Diego, the bagger-person always asks me if I need help in carrying the groceries to the car. I never need help. In Lansing, the person just said, thank you, and that was it. Yesterday, another discovery was made. First Terence Lyons found his sister Philomena in the film Dus Lakh (1966). Then Edwina found herself in the same movie in another song. As usual, she is uncredited, you know, because she is an 'Unsung Bollywood Dancer of the Golden Era'. So, I added another appearance to her growing uncredited filmography, updated it on my website

A raspberry fell on Benjamin's head and he discovered a corollary to Newton's 3rd Law. The 3rd law is that to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Newton neglected to discover that sometimes the reaction happens BEFORE the action. BCS (Benjamin) says "uh-oh" before he impishly switches off the TV in the middle of your favorite show. BCS starts saying "ooh-aah" before he actually eats his raspberries and cereal bits etc.

After I got married and brought my wife to Shillong, our Bengali landlords invited us for tea. [About 40 years ago.] They brought tea and cookies and said, drink. I asked what about you. They said, oh we have already had our tea. We drank and ate while they watched. It was very uncomfortable. In the Punjab the tea custom for guests is completely different. Even if you have 5 members of the family, and even if any number of invited or uninvited guests keep showing up all day, EVERYBODY GETS TEA AND COOKIES EVERY SINGLE TIME! And, if the guests are special, somebody runs to the store and buys SAMOSAS for EVERYBODY!

I got a shock when I opened an envelop from the San Diego City Water

Corpn. The bill and the water usage was twice as last time. What now? Helpfully, they had included a pamphlet about what to do if the bill is too high. Number 3 on the list, meter misread! But where is the meter? Many years ago we had a water leak and one of the restoration guys helpfully pointed out to me the water shutoff valves, the regulator and the meter. When I lifted the stone cover, a bunch of spiders and insects ran out, I ran away too. After a minute, peeked in. Could not see clearly. Then, thanks to quantum mechanics and Hedy Lamarr, having a camera in the cell phone, I took a photo. Yup, it was a misread, 66 was on the bill and 57 on the meter. Called the customer service, after pressing the usual buttons and waiting for about 3 minutes, a nice lady answered. I said I have a meter misread. She asked for the address and the name on the account, agreed it was a misread and promised to send a revised bill! I wish all the life's problems were that easy to solve. Lesson: Support the Basic Sciences and hire smart film actors! What about the nice customer care lady? That's just luck.

On Jan 1, 1977, I, my father, my uncle and the middleman arrived at a house in New Delhi. They welcomed us and brought tea and bread rolls. I liked the rolls and asked, where did you get them from? Harmesh made them, her sister said. "Theek hee lag rihai" (So far, it is looking good), I said to my father. Then Harmesh came accompanied by her sister. When I saw her for the first time ever, I thought in my mind, OMG, she looks just like Madhubala! We talked a little and she went away. I looked at my father and my uncle and all of us nodded. Then Harmesh's sister returned and said to me that Harmesh is a little bit taller than I am. I looked at my father and my uncle, they shook their heads, and I said, "saanoon koe fark naheen paidaa (Makes no difference to us). [Thanks to Harmesh, and, probably, BGH in US dairy products, both of my sons are taller than both of us!] Her father came and did some ceremonies. I was then taken inside to where Harmesh was sitting. I put a ring on her finger and we were engaged!

Early 80s. My family and her sister's family were strolling in Connaught Place New Delhi. Felt like having tea. Saw a restaurant in the middle of CP. All sat down. Then I saw the menu. Six rupees for one cup of tea, I said to my brother-in-law. He said, What!. All of us got up and walked out. It is no longer there! Early 2010s, a new restaurant (Bawarchi) had opened in Little India, San Diego. There was a section near the entrance, but we headed to the sit-down area. Sat down, looked at the menu. We felt like having Masala Dosas. The order-taker said, Sir, Masala Dosa is available only in the outside section. I said, thank you very much and we all walked out. The restaurant is closed!

I was secretly jealous and proud of Prof (then grad student) Jaideep

Taggart Singh] when he was mentioned in the New York Times, but now a link to my website (founded c 1999) found its way into an obituary of Madhubala! All is well :)

When I published my first book (Edwina biography), Amazon asked me if I wanted to publish it as an ebook on Kindle. I said yes, but found out that it was too much work to re-format and prepare for the new format. Recently, they started doing the preparation themselves, so that I just have to say, yes and it is done! As a consequence, all of my books are now also available in Kindle format! Look in the usual places. BTW they asked me if I want to activate DRM, I said NO, because, in the words of Marx,..... I am against it :)

Dada Phalke is reputed to be the father of the Indian Cinema. Why, because even though people made short films earlier, he made the first feature film. So, is there a Mother of Indian Cinema? When her husband did not have money, she suggested to sell her household things so he can travel to UK. When her husband's friends tried to send him to a mental asylum, she disagreed. When he was busy learning to make films, she was busy raising their 9 children. She helped with the carpentry and the electrical equipment on the set. Note : Info from Lights... Camera... Action! by Rupali Bhawe.

Just found out that my friend P N Pandita had passed away. Revisiting the story of my first PRL ever, it was with him. I once published a paper that was 'Not Even Wrong!' In fact, it was my first Phys Rev Letter (PRL). Not Even Wrong is a phrase attributed to the great early 20th century Italian physicist W Pauli. I roughly means a theory or a calculation that is mathematically very good and correct but has no relevance to reality. I am sure we all know theories like that :) This happened (in 1983) when I was in Shillong and a new particle physicist joined our dept. I was talking to him about what was new in his subject and he mentioned SUSY! This is the idea that a supersymmetry prevails whereby Bosons can change into Fermions and vice versa. Being the condensed matter physicist that I am, I asked him what happened to Bose condensation if they kept changing into Fermions. He said he did not know because nobody in the world had asked that question before! I asked him to give me a toy supersymmetric Hamiltonian. He gave and I made the calculation. Of course, the condensation temperature was depressed and all other kinds of things happened. He said, let us write it for PRL. We did and submitted the paper with the title, Supersymmetric Phase Transition. Winter vacation came and, as usual, I was at TIFR, Bombay. I got a letter from P N Pandita, my co-author, saying that our paper had been accepted by PRL. It was very thrilling, my first

PRL! (I have 9 now.) PRL publishes only very important papers, they reject about 60%, and they publish them very fast. So, while I was still at TIFR, the particle physicists saw our paper and asked me to give a seminar about it. I did. Considering that it was a PRL, obviously a very important piece of work, the reaction was somewhat muted. I even heard one of the particle physics guys (perhaps Probir Roy) saying words to the effect, 'I guess SUSY is in fashion'. That is how I published my first ever PRL and my only 'Not Even Wrong' paper!

It happened when I was doing my Masters degree in Chandigarh (1966-68). My parents lived in Khanna, about 2 hours by bus. I used to visit them about twice a month. So, one time, I reached home in the afternoon and went to see some friends. My mom cooked food and we waited for my father to return from work. He was the manager / accountant of India Iron and Steel Rerolling Mills, Mandi Gobindgarh, about 7 miles away on GT Road. He used commute using a bicycle. He used to return by 6 pm but it was 8 pm and he was still not home. My mom handed me his letterhead (it had the factory phone number on it) and said, call him! I said, mom, I have never used a phone, I don't know how to. She shouted, you have 2 degrees and working on a third, I don't care, CALL HIM. I took a friend along and started walking and thinking how to call him. I remember having seen a building called Telephone Exchange on GT Road. I thought, surely one can make a phone call from a telephone exchange. My friend and I went up to the building, entered, walked through a corridor and found a single bored man sitting next to a switchboard and reading a novel. (Khanna then probably had 50 phones in all.) He asked, what do you want? I showed him the letterhead and said, I want to call my father. He said, this is a telephone exchange, you cannot make calls from here, get out find a phone! Suitably humbled and feeling stupid, I asked him where to find a phone. He said, go the grain market, almost every agent there had a phone and some might be still open. So, both of us walked to the first one and told him that my mom was worried because my father had not come home and we wanted to call him. He handed me the phone. I meekly said, I do not know how to use it. He looked at me with obvious scorn and snatched the letterhead from me. He called the operator (probably the same guy we had met before) and gave him the number for making a trunk call. After eternity, the line was connected and the agent handed me the phone. Now, I had seen where to put the phone relative to my face, thanks to Hindi movies! I did and I heard the factory owner's wife. I had met her many times. She recognized me and told me that my dad was working late and had left already. I handed the phone to the agent and asked how much I owed him. He smiled and said, don't worry about it, go home. We went home and my father was already there. When I was in Pittsburgh, we got a phone connection the same day

as we got the apartment, my room mate got us a blue Princess Phone! Many of my friends called their parents. I even saw my room mate talk to his parents once in a while. The phone book had detailed instructions on how to call India. My father wrote to me 3-4 times a year, always on his factory letterhead. It is difficult to believe but it never occurred to me to call my dad from Pittsburgh. He could have brought my mom, my brother. my grand-mother (who I loved dearly) to the phone call. but it never happened. I have done quite a few stupid things in my life, but this one tops the list by far. My father passed away on May 28, 1994. Miss you terribly, dad.

In India, telegrams are usually very bad news. The first time I remember seeing a telegram was around 1956-57. It had come from Gauhati to our ancestral village home in Jamalpura, Maler Kotla. My uncle, Om Prakash, received it with trepidation and opened it with trembling hands, It was merely an announcement from my Assam wale phupphaD ji (my father's sister's, Assamwali bhuaji's husband) that they will be arriving by such and such train on such and such date! He always sent a telegram when he was arriving. All of us got used to it. So, it happened when I was in Chandigarh. I was going to go to the hostel canteen to have some samosas and tea with my best buddies, Abnash (Economics student), Durgadas and Surendra Kumar (Physics class fellows), when Pradeep Kumar (another Physics class fellow) caught me, gave me a telegram, and said with a very sad face, Surjit, I have some very bad news, your father has passed away! I snatched the telegram and read. It said, "Father passed away, come home soon, Amarnath." Now, Amarnath was my middle uncle and I was sure that he was talking about his father, i.e. my grandfather, because I knew that he had been ill. Anyway. I immediately set for Ludhiana, where my grand-parents lived at that time. Sadly, my grandfather, Mansaram, had indeed passed away. My father? Oh, he lived for almost 30 years more and passed away on May 28, 1994. Miss you terribly, dad.

I think it was in 8th or 9th grade that I read a Hindi novel by Gurudutt. In this one he was trying to show how 'depraved' American culture was. He did it by including the translation of a passage from an English novel called Peyton Place! Of course, I immediately went to a book store specializing in English books, bought a copy and read it in one sitting! Veena and Iftekhar! For a long time I believed that Iftekhar was Veena's brother. Why? Because a magazine article said so and a very reliable friend also said so. But when Shishir Krishna Sharma (Beetehuedin) asked Veena if Iftekhar was her brother, she said no, he was not. What about my two independent sources? Turned out they were both from Indore, so they were not so independent. I apologized publicly for believing so. Imagine my surprise when I saw the following item in the June 1946 issue of filmindia! It says clearly that the

filmstar Veena is a sister of Shehzada Iftekhhar! So, did Veena was actor Iftekhhar's sister? You decide :)

For a long time I believed that Iftekhhar was Veena's brother. Why? Because a magazine article said so and a very reliable friend also said so. But when Shishir Krishna Sharma (of Beete Hue Din blog and books) asked Veena if Iftekhhar was her brother, she said no, he was not. What about my two independent sources? Turned out they were both from Indore, so they were not so independent. I apologized publicly for believing so. Imagine my surprise when I saw the following item in the June 1946 issue of filmindia! It says clearly that the filmstar Veena is a sister of Shehzada Iftekhhar! So, did Veena was actor Iftekhhar's sister? You decide :)

Sometimes it happens that two groups of scientists look at the same data, build mathematical models to understand it, but come to opposite conclusions. Sometimes leaders of the two groups even get Nobel Prizes! It happened in Economics in 2013 when Eugene Fama and Robert Shiller got it for Efficient Markets and Behavioral Economics, respectively! in fact, when Shiller first proposed his theory, the two groups fought like cats and dogs in Economics journals.

Of course, it happened in Physics too. When Einstein got his Nobel in 1905 for explaining the Photoelectric Effect, James Haar also got it for an opposing and rival theory.

NOT! I just made up most of the facts in the last paragraph. It never happened in Physics, or Chemistry, or Medicine. The Economics situation just strengthens my belief that the 'science' of Economics is a joke and most of these guys have been completely bought off by the myriads of fake institutes set up by the Koch brothers and their friends.

When I was learning the subject of (presumably British) English in grades 6-11, my Indian English teachers made a great effort to explain the difference between can and may, shall and will, between and among, and many other similar-meaning words. They took off marks if we got confused between them. About 10 years later I ended up in Pittsburgh! I found out that native speakers of American English didn't care at all. They used words as they pleased, often not even worrying about elder and older. And they contracted phrases furiously, I've, you'll. Some contractions used in Pittsburgh were so complex (e.g. jeet jet = Did you eat yet?) that one needed a dictionary :) See

We usually clean our house ourselves but once in a while we hire a maid

from a cleaning service. So we hired and a young lady showed up. I asked her (just to confirm) in English if she was from the cleaning service. She did not reply but pushed her Android phone towards me. I ignored that and I asked her to bring her supplies and equipment from the car. She pushed the phone again and I ignored again. This time she said something in Spanish and pointed to the screen. I looked and was amazed by what I saw. It had the whole conversation, what I said then its Spanish translation, then stuff in Spanish and its English translation! She knew no English but was using an App! We had no problems communicating after that. Now, why can't the Indian Supreme Court do that, ie use Apps to communicate :)

A phone conversation with my BFF [Dr Manohar Kapur] today (January20, 2019): Me, hello how are you? He, hello, good. You have this 78 record with the song, 'hamaaree galee aanaa achchhaaji'. Please let me know know if the record says who the singers are. And please let me know what song is on the other side and the singers listed, if any. I do have the song from Shukriya 1944, not sure if I have the record. You do have the record. You played it at the RMIM meet in your house (in Suffolk) during June 2006, when guri asked for it. Oh, OK. I have 200 78s, will have to look. You have only 200? I now have more than 1,200 records! So, I am a bigger record collector than you! What, how? How did you get all these records. You had only about a dozen when I visited you place (San Diego) in August 2011. Mrs Rosie Anand gifted the whole collection (Betas, VHSs, Audio Tapes, CDs, 78s, EPs, LPs etc.) of her late husband Mr Amarjit Singh Anand to me. You lucky duck. Let me look for that record. Will get back to you. Bye. Bye. Photo from August 2011 in the house of our mutual friend Zainuddin Vahanvaty], from left Dr Kapur, Mr Vahanvaty, Prof Singh.

When I was learning Punjabi, my teacher pointed out that a person who can see is called 'sujaakhaa', as opposed to a person who cannot see, 'annah'. He said that there is no word in English for 'sujaakhaa'. I asked my English teacher the word corresponding to not blind. He did not know! That was in 1959. I kept asking, nobody seemed to know. When I came to Pittsburgh in 1969, I asked my American best friend, he said without blinking, 'sighted'! Which brings us to a person who cannot smell properly or not at all. He is called 'anosmic' or 'anosmatic'. So, question: Are there single words for anosmic in the Indian languages?

Meriem Green, a black lady, was the mother hen of the Physics Department at the University of Pittsburgh. Everybody from lofty Professors to lowly undergrads came to her for help. She knew whom to call, arm-twist or shout at to get things done. When I arrived there on a

Monday morning they handed me a test, a notebook, and a ball-point pen. It was a GRE-type test and I am a very good test taker. They said see Mrs Green in the afternoon for course assignments. Me (not known to give up easily): Well, the British invented the language, they call it shedewl. MG (visibly annoyed, raising her voice, sternly): Young man (I was 21 yrs old), when you go to London, you can say whatever you want. In Pittsburgh, it is skejule. MG (sweetly and smiling): Oh sure, have a seat. Let me see if it's already typed up.

Riazuddin and Fayaazuddin were twin brothers, famous Theoretical Particle Physicists from Pakistan. I did not know that they were born and brought up in Ludhiana. I spent my teen years there.

My interview with pothi xxx

My interview with the indian express xxx

I was talking to my BFF (Manohar Lal Kapur) the other day. He is about 10 years older and has never been to a hospital (except once about 30 yrs ago). I wondered aloud about the secret of his good health and asked him about his day in detail. Mostly similar to mine, but he eats meat, fish and eggs. One thing that struck me was that he loves tomatoes! Whenever he passes the kitchen, he cuts a tomato and eats it. So, I started doing it. Then I got bored and started eating different fruit instead. Then I thought why not replace my usual lunch (wife makes it with bread/bun/left-over vegs/pickles) with a fruit plate! So, now I make two fruit plates (small portions of every single fruit available in the food store) with walnuts and chaaT masaala sprinkled on. Have been doing it for a month. I am losing about half a pound every week, BMI less than 25, sugar levels improved, and, I am now making two meals out of three in the house (i was already giving my wife breakfast in bed.) Health is improving, wife is happier. Life is good!

For certain project I am involved in I am watching all my movies again to gather info. From my hard disk, Jawani Ki Hawa (1959) would not play. Of course, other hard disk copies also don't play. Original copies are still in boxes. Too lazy to go to the garage and try to find it, I looked at my notes. Turns out a copy had come from my BFF Manohar Kapur (who else?). So I called him asked about his health, as usual, we talk weekly. SS: Please check if you still have a copy of Jawani Ki Hawa (1959). SS: You bought this film from Surjit Singh/Tejpaul Singh of Lajpat Rai Market, near Chandni Chowk, Delhi, when you went to India during 2009. SS: Oh, looks like my notes are wrong, it came from elsewhere. MLK (interrupting me): suniye to

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

sahee (=listen to me first!). MLK: I went upstairs to look. Looked in the J section. It was the first one! I have it! He promised to send a copy when he is able to go to the Post Office again.

We video chat with Benjamin (our grandson, 4 years old) often. He is at home but still learning new things. Example. Earlier at the end of the session he would say, Bye Grandpa, Bye Grandma, Bye Chachaji (uncle)! Now he says, Bye Guys! When his dad requests him to say bye to us individually, he smiles and pretends not to understand :) He will go far.

Couple of pages from my first passport. I arrived in New York on August 28, 1969. The 'MED' on the bottom left means that I was carrying a huge lung X-ray with me that the Immigration Officer looked at and said that I could now board the plane to Pittsburgh! In those days, they were very careful about Tuberculosis and Communism, because lots of questions were asked about the latter in the Visa application. I replied appropriately.

By the time I reached grade 10, nobody really cared that I stood first in my school. This English teacher (Rajinder Singh BA BT) decided to reward me with a book, no doubt bought with his own money. I have cherished it ever since March 1961. The rubber stamp you see on the title page was made by me. I went to Chaura (=Wide) Bazaar (ironically named because all the streets and lanes were narrow) and bought the wooden stamper, rubber making solution, a frame to hold the type. He did not have any type to sell, but he said that I could get it from a Printing Press further down the street. I went there and saw the upper and lower cases and the matrixes where they kept the lead type. They sold it by weight. The compositor was kind enough to choose all the English and Panjabi type I needed to print one page. This is where I found out that for Indian scripts you need two types, peeDhe (solid) and polay (hollow). The former is for letters without maatraa (vowels) and the latter to slide the vowel signs into position! I made the stamp, also printed (=rubber-stamped) a few copies of a one-page magazine called The Student in English.

When I came to Chandigarh to pursue an MS in Physics, I forgot to bring the copy of Ghalib's Ghazals (in Urdu) that originally belonged to my uncle Om Prakash Rahi Jamalपुरi. However, I kept reciting Ghalib's poetry to my friends. So, one of them, Durga Das Singal, gifted me a copy in Devanagari (with meanings of difficult words in Hindi). Another book I have loved and carried with me.

Wandering around in the library of the University of Pittsburgh in the early 70s, I found this book. I had to have it. Went to the book store. They

said they would order it for me but they needed \$50 as deposit. I gave them a check, the total cost was \$100, one-fourth of my monthly salary then. Sir Ralph Turner worked for forty years to produce this monumental work! Thank gods for people like him (the compilers) and the SOAS where he worked. Even though it is very heavy, I have carried it with me wherever I went.

I read a lot. I read every book from my grandfather's library. A lot from the Panjab University Extension Library and the Govt College Library, Ludhiana and the PU Library, Chandigarh. Also from a small lending library near my school, read Jaasoosi Duniyaa, Manohar Kahaaniyaan etc. So, when somebody asked me something on any topic, I was able to tell them. Almost always. Other times I would say, I will tell you tomorrow and head to the library :) So, when the MS class association in Chandigarh wanted to give me a nickname in the annual function, they gave this. I was very thin and Vimgram was an energy product.

Tabassum's program was on cross-dressing, songs with male dressed as females etc. Saw a song with Rishi Kapoor and (Kanwarjit Singh) Paintal and mentioned to my wife that I saw this film with my BFF Abnash Julka, soon after returning from the US. I forget the name of the Hollywood film that this is based on. Me (in my best professorial voice): My dear, you are confusing it with another Marilyn Monroe picture where she spends a summer living upstairs in a duplex with a manuscript reviewer. Professor (suitably humbled and remembering): Of course, my dear, as always, you are right! This one is Some Like It Hot and that was The Seven Year Itch. She is not only an expert on post-60s Bollywood but also remembers whatever English films she happened to see :)

Whenever my friends came to my house in San Diego, they saw a set of 5 books in every room of the house. Many knew, to others I had to explain the legendary work of Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' of Kanpur, the Hindi Film Geet Kosh, Encyclopedia of Hindi Films and Songs. I received the first volume in 1981 and could not sleep for three nights, just looking at it and thinking about it. The keen observer would have noticed that in one of the pictures from my new house in Lansing, MI, Volume 4 is missing. Around 15 years ago, on a Sunday morning I received a call from an American woman from the East coast, saying that her Indian husband is a fan of 60s Hindi Songs and she would like to buy a copy of Volume 4 as a birthday gift to him. She must have read about in on my website. I explained the standard procedure to her, she sends me a check, I cash it and email 'Hamraaz' and he the sends the book/s by Air Mail Registered from Kanpur. She said that she needs it by Wednesday and would pay any price :)

So, I sent one of my copies by Express Mail. Her check also arrived in due course. PS: Turns out I had actually replaced the said Vol 4, but it was later gifted to Dr Chandrashekhar who visited San Diego later.

For a long time the academic world ignored Indian films. Then Satyajit Ray happened and the academics were too happy to write about him and the New Wave and the Parallel Cinema, conveniently forgetting about the vastly more prolific and popular Hindi and the South Indian film industry. In the mid-eighties when the total number of films produced in India became the largest in the world, the industry could no longer be ignored and there was a flood of academic articles, books etc. But the Hindi film song was still being ignored as a quirk. All changed with the dissertation of Alison Arnold, 'Hindi Film Geet'. She studied Hindi film songs from 1931 to 1990s. Her tables and charts are based on the Hindi Film Geet Kosh, which she profusely acknowledges. This led to many more studies, articles, books on the songs in Indian films, all mentioning the 'Hamraaz' encyclopedia. I leave you with one example. Rajadhyaksha, Ashish, *Reconstructing the Indian Filmography* (2010), *Journal of the Moving Image* (2010). "... mainly because its own key source for Hindi credits before 1970 was Firoze Rangoonwala's iconic *Indian Filmography, Silent and Hindi Film: 1897-1969*, published in 1970 and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz's somewhat different, equally legendary *Hindi Film Geet Kosh* which came out with the first edition of its 1951-60 listings in 1980. The Singh Geet Kosh tradition would provide bulwark support both on its own but also through a series of other Geet Koshes by Harish Raghuvanshi on Gujarati, Murli Dhar Soni on Rajasthani and many others."

In the US, you can get some info from a person's last name, eg O'Brian most likely has Irish ancestry and McDonald is Scottish. In India you can tell much more, probably religion, caste, province, sub-caste, social status etc. So when a young man named Deepak Dhar joined TIFR, all my friends were saying that he does not look like a Kashmiri Pandit. A few Marathi friends speculated that he may be a Marathi. After a few years when I was in Shillong, I received a wedding invitation from Deepak Dhar. It had the phrase, Deepak Dhar s/o Murlidhar Gupta! Here he is standing next to me in a conference in New Delhi some time in the mid-eighties, along with many other Condensed Matterists. Prabodh Shukla was chairing a session and is not in this photo.

True Story. Finished PhD from the Univ of Pittsburgh in Feb 75, joined TIFR in July 75. Mentioned to Sudhanshu Jha that I would like to teach. He mentioned a new univ in Shillong. Coming from a small village in the Punjab and not knowing the ways of the world, I thought like this. I am a

PhD with less than 2 years of experience, I will apply for a lecturer-ship. So I did. The interview was in the UGC offices in Delhi. They interviewed candidates for the positions of Professors, Readers and then Lecturers. My turn came towards the end. I am a very good exam-taker and interviewee. I did very well. After it was done, the VC asked me to wait outside. After a few minutes he called me in. The Committee was the VC, KK Gupta, SS Jha, BL Saraf and probably one more. The VC said, oh we so wish that you had applied for a Readership! You are the best candidate by far among all we have interviewed today for any position. The Professor and Reader positions have been allotted, so we will make you a Lecturer with twelve increments so that you will get the same salary as a Reader, Rs 1500 basic. After a few years we will make you a Reader, KK Gupta smiled and nodded. Few years later when the time came, I was not even called for an interview :) Later I found out that the two Readers selected were YST Rao (KK Gupta's candidate) and YS Shishodia (BL Saraf's candidate). A few years later a savvy high class Brahmin from a big city with similar qualifications as mine at that time, applied for a Readership and got It :) He rose through the ranks to become the Vice-Chancellor of NEHU!

Joined TIFR in July 1975, they asked me to teach a Summer Refresher Course on Thermodynamics and Stat Mech to College Teachers. Did. Spent evenings playing carrom with grad students and other post-docs. One GP Singh, a student of BK Basu, was working on experimental studies of the ferro-electric phase transition using ultrasound. One day he asked me to help with explaining his experimental data. I asked him to show me the latest and bestest theory. Turned out to be a simple mean field approximation to an acoustic phonon coupling to the order parameter of the ferro-electric phase transition. I taught him how to do a random-phase approximation using Green's functions. He was bright, leaned quickly. That was my first paper after my PhD thesis. I guided him some more, we published more and he got his PhD and went to the US, where he is now. His boss BK Basu was very pleased, he invited me to his home for dinner. He even told his boss R Vijayaraghavan about it; he was very pleased too. I asked GP Singh, you have an army of brilliant Theoretical Physicists on the third floor, why have you not talked to them. He said he did, they just yawned listening to him and gave the impression that they did not want to see him again! Me, I made a habit of collaborating with experimental physicists and published more than 25 papers explaining their hard-earned experimental results, even a few papers in the Physical Review Letters!

I lost a chess match in Chandigarh! Usually people think that if you are bright in one area you must be brilliant in everything. So these chess club

guys wanted me to enter in the class chess competition. I told them I did not know how to play chess. They did not believe me at all saying that I just wanted to avoid playing to devote more time to my studies. They completely ignored the fact that I never needed to 'study'. In fact one of the things I was known for was the following. Ask Surjit Singh if he wanted to go to the movies. He dropped everything and said, Let's go! I tried very hard to explain. Did not work. So, I entered the competition and learned the basics from my dear friend, Abnash Julka. In the very first match, after about 10 moves, I got into a hopeless situation and then my opponent, R. K. Bansal noticed that my bishops and horsies were in very inconsistent positions! It turns out that I had made a mistake in the initial setup by putting the bishops next to the rooks and nobody noticed. I lost the competition miserably. My supporters and even R. K. Bansal insisted that I lost purposely so that I could devote more time to my studies. Years later I met Bansal and told him again that I really did not know how to play chess at all. I definitely made his day because he believed me this time!

When the internet arrived, most of the people in the US universities got email. Then USENET was invented. It was a discussion group format where people discussed stuff by email and then by newsgroups. The mother of all Indian film discussion groups was started early; the first post was on Jan 1, 1992. Its name is RMIM (rec.music.indian.misc). I wrote a book on it; you can read it on my website. Naturally there were heated discussions. Here is one involving 'balls on the table'. It happened during March 1994.

In a recent tweet (December 16) Lata wrote that she sang on the Bombay Radio Station for the first time in 1941. I found this in the Program Guide of December 1941. It says that 'Lalita' Mangeshkar is going to sing 'Mori Nindiya Gamaye' in Raag Bihaag at the Bombay Radio Station at 6:10 pm. My guess is that 'Lalita' is really jagat didi Lata. Can somebody please contact her and confirm?

We were too poor to have a radio or collect records. My first cassette was given to me in 1970 in Pittsburgh, by my friend Kishore Saralkar, who had returned from a visit to India and had brought many spools of songs. I bought a portable tape recorder and he transferred a few songs of Saigal, Jigmohan and Pankaj Mullick using cables bought from Radio Shack to connect his reel-type player. You might say that I have been collecting music for 50 years :) That tape was worn out by 1975 when I returned to India. The first tape I actually bought was a Noor Jehan-Suraiya combo (obviously recorded from the records). I did not buy it from Rhythm House (Bombay) or other authorized dealer. Their selections were limited and they

charged 40-45 rupees for a 30 minute tape. But if you walked from VT to Fountain, you were met by many enterprising young men with huge selections all made from the records, usually 45 minutes and priced at Rs 25! That one also wore out, I should have saved the fake-looking poor label with a photo of the two ladies. In the 70s-80s, we used to get a lot of similar tapes made in Hong Kong and Singapore, in the Bada Bazar area of Shillong. I bought a lot of those, still have them. But my unique collection started when I came to Canada in 1983. The VHS tapes of the films were coming out. We used to rent the tapes and the heavy machine, coming home walking all the way from the shop. Could not afford a car or a VHS player, so I recorded the audio songs from the films on cassette tapes. I have a lot of these too. Finally, I converted all of this stuff to digital, then to mp3, putting it all on my website. But I still have all the tapes. I have boxes full of them. Here is one of them.

When I was very young, I used to listen this 10-part drama on five 78 discs. My father gave away all of his gramophones and records except this set, when we left Kaithal, Haryana in 1953 after my mom passed away. These records have been preserved since then. I brought them with me from India in May 2006. They have not been played since 1953. I bought an audio-technica Model AT-PL50 just to play these; I do not have any other records of any other kind, well, except a single Bandini record that Dr. M L Kapur gave me recently. Of course, this record player does not have 78 speed! So, I played them on 45 and recorded the audio in wav form. Then I used a software called 'Spin It Again' to adjust the speed and do some mild cleaning.

I went to school in the town of Malerkotla, Punjab. It consists of two smaller towns, Maler and Kotla. In 1904, a new bazaar called Moti Bazaar was built at the junction of the two. Under normal circumstances, there are big crowds, cars, cycles, bullock carts and what not making huge noise. Here is a scene during the pandemic lockdown, when two poor guys are caught and are made to do uTThak-baThak by the Punjab Police :)

I have published papers in Physical Review Letters, Physical Review A, B, D, and E. Why not C? I could not find a decent Nuclear Theorist to collaborate. In Shillong, the chairman was KK Gupta, a Theoretical Nuclearist. I was gossiping with him in his office one day and asked, so what is new in Nuclear Physics? He said, nothing, Nuclear Physics is dead! Y S T Rao, who was also there, said, what about Skyrme? KKG said, fad, it's a fad, will die in a few more years :) Notwithstanding with the above, I did my Master's Thesis in Nuclear Physics Theory with PN Trehan of the Panjab Univ, Chandigarh. It was not published. I show you the quotation

page, the title page, and a typical equation page; equations had to be written by hand :)

Many of my papers (even in PRL) have come about because I keep asking fellow physicists, 1. How is everything going? 2. What are you working on these days? 3. Please tell me more! (or pher hore dasso.) I was very happy to see Prabodh Shukla join NEHU (1980 or so). When I asked him about the latest in the field of Phase Transitions and Critical Phenomena, he said that people are now doing Random systems like Spin-Glasses and also Dynamics. I asked if the mean field theory is understood, he said yes. After that one usually goes to improved mean field, random-phase or spherical model, or RG. I asked him if the spherical model of spin-glasses has been done. [Half of my thesis was on spherical model!]. He said not to his knowledge. I said, good, but how do you get the eigenvalues of random matrices. He educated me about Mehta's book and Wigner's semi-circular law. We got to work quickly, finishing up the statics, dynamics of both the classical and the quantal model. We published 3 journal papers and one in a book called the Physics of Disordered Solids, Ed. P. Shukla, Mittal Publications, Delhi (1983). The book happened because he wanted to have a conference on disordered systems in Shillong! I told him not to waste his time, too much bureaucracy and lots of work. He ignored me and single-handedly got the grant money, invited everybody, had the conference and published the book! Sadly, we do not have a group photo. My only contribution to the conference was a dinner hosted by my wife. There and then I knew this kid will go far, he did; he retired as the Vice-Chancellor of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong.

A Wild Goose Chase: I was in the fourth grade and had learned the four arithmetic operations and the associated word problems. I used to love doing additions, subtractions, multiplications and divisions. People used to give me problems to solve and I did them quickly. One day an uncle came and saw me doing a long multiplication. He said, I bet you can't do this one and then he recited a couplet. It must be old but I could not find it anywhere. "ik rattee surmaa naun janiyaan, naun man surmaa kai janiyaan?" Translation: One rattee (a small weight measure) is enough surmaa (an eye cosmetic) for nine women, how many women can use nine maunds (a large weight measure) of it? I immediately started to work, using all the intermediate weights like maashaa, tolaa, chhataak, ser etc. After a few minutes, I looked at him and said, you can see that I can do it, do you really need to know the exact answer? He said, Well Done! I just wanted to see how long before you realized that it is an allam-gallam problem! Moral: If something is worth doing, it is worth doing well (Marilyn Monroe), but not everything is worth doing!

Generosity of RK Pathria and PRL Number 4. Pathria hired me in Oct 1983 for one year. In the first week, he taught me how to do finite-size effects on any system and I taught him critical phenomena. We published 5 papers in the first year, including one PRL! Next year, he renewed my contract and he went on a sabbatical to California. I kept working, we talked once a week. He even paid me to go to conferences. In one of these conferences in New York, I ran into Jayanth Banavar, he was junior to me in Pittsburgh. After talking about old times, I asked him, as usual, how is life, what are you working on these days, and, of course, 'pher hor dasso' :) He said he is trying to study magnetic critical phenomena in random magnetic fields. I asked him, as usual, mean-field theory? He said, done. Spherical Model, no! So, I taught him briefly about spherical model and asked him to do it for general d dimensions, while I would do the finite-size effects. We did and sent it to PRL, they published it. The paper was so self-explanatory that we never got around to publishing the customary longer version. While the calculation was in progress, I mentioned it to Raj Kumar Pathria in our weekly talk and asked him if he wanted his name on the paper, after all he was paying me. He told me that he had nothing to do with this calculation, and gave a firm NO as the answer, and asked us to mention only his grant. They don't make people like that any more. The photo shows RK Pathria and G Wilse Robinson, when RKP visited us in 1988. I am RKP's largest co-author (22 papers) and also GWR's largest (37 papers).

It is 1981 and I am happily sitting in my office (Bijni House, Shillong) when a student, B Dey walks into my office and shuts the door. He says he wants to talk to me about a personal problem. The problem turns out to be that while my student, Wendy Loslet Basaiwmoit, is making good progress, he is doing nothing. His boss is an experimental physicist, Dr Y S Jain, no equipment on which to do experiments, and he and other students are just twiddling their thumbs. He wants to join my group. I said, no problem, let us talk about it after the winter vacation. He said, sir, please please give me something to do, I am itching to do something during the two-month vacation. I had taught him in MSc and knew him to be among the top 2 or three students. So, I said, give me day or two. I flipped a few journal pages and saw a calculation of the Debye specific heat of some solid with a two-part (low and high frequency) ugly phonon frequency distribution. The distribution did not seem right to me. So, I cooked up my own prettier-looking distribution and asked Dey to study the original paper, re-do the calculation with it. I thought it will keep him busy for a few months and I will talk to Dr Jain after the vacation. I went off to my annual winter vacation visit to TIFR, Navy Nagar, Bombay. Imagine my surprise when,

without any further guidance from me, he sent me a manuscript and details of his work. The work was flawless, so, I edited the ms minorly, had it re-typed by a TIFR steno, and sent it off to Phys Letts, where the original paper was published. More surprise, A A Maradudin, the editor, accepted it! Of course, all hell broke loose when I returned to Shillong after winter vacation. You see, I had stolen a student. Dey was thrown out and, with Dr Y S T Rao's help, got admitted to the Institute of Physics, Bhubaneswar. He is now a Professor at the University of Poona. Dr Yatendra Singh Jain was understandably very mad at me. He went to the then Chairman, Dr Anandi Lal Verma, to whom he complained bitterly. Later, Dr Jain and I became very good friends, our families visited each other, went to picnics, saw movies and had dinners! How so? When the next positions opened, of course, Dr Verma refused even to call me for interview when I applied for promotion. Dr Jain did go to the interview but Dr Verma brought in another friend of his as a Reader. So, Dr Jain, who was apparently promised a Readership, was furious with Dr Verma. He came to me and we talked our hearts out about the 'injustices' done to us by our now common enemy Dr Verma and became friends. :) Me? After my student graduated, I moved to TIFR, spent some time in Canada and the US doing Physics, built analytical models for a Business Analytics company for 16 years, retired, and published lots of books on Hindi movies, and am living happily ever after!

I make breakfast (cereal+milk|microwave) and coffee. I bring it to my wife who is usually still sleeping. So, I say, 'uTh jaa hamaare palang se!', at first gently, later loudly, finally into her ear. QUIZ: Who said to whom in which film, uTh Jaa Hamaare Palang Se! Answer: In Octopussy, in a cliché-ridden chase through an Indian bazaar, when a faqir steps away from his bed of nails for a moment, a goon comes flying and falls on his bed of nails, and that is when the faqir utters these immortal words!

I am quite dumb at understanding Hindi film music styles after 1950 or so when heavy orchestration came and won over it all. For the most part I cannot tell which instruments are being used. I may recognize some OP Nayyar, some Madan Mohan, may be Salil, but to distinguish between Shankar-Jaikshan, Kalyanji-Anandji, Laxmi-Pyare etc. is beyond me. However, we have great geniuses on Facebook! Not only they can tell which music director, and, if it is a duo like Shankar-Jaikshan, they can point out with pin point accuracy which song, nay, even a brief piece, was done by S or J, and they can do that without any false positives and with hundred per cent detection rate.

My First Capitalist :) Frankly I did not know that at the time, but it

became clear much later. It was 1961 and I was in 9th grade. Everybody already knew that I loved to learn new things and also to teach them. For students like me, who chose Higher Physics, Chemistry and Math, all the books, lectures, homework, exams, everything was in English, even though we started learning English only three years previously. I was always surrounded by my friends (mostly from lower-middle class background like me) helping them. We had one student (obviously from a rich family) who came to school on his scooter, at a time when most teachers could afford only a bicycle. His name was HS Sial. His family was very rich in the other Punjab and had to run away to our Punjab 14 years earlier. One day when I was busy helping my friends after school, HS Sial came there with his father. They waited till I was finished. Then his father said to me that his son told him that when I explained something to him he understood it very well, and so he wanted me to help his son with the science subjects. He added that the deal was that his son would take me on his scooter to their house, in Model Town, Ludhiana, on the correct side of the railway tracks, I would tutor him, and, after one hour, he would drop me off, on his scooter, to our one-room rental, on the wrong side of the tracks. He would pay me Rs 20 a month. Of course, I jumped at the offer! For comparison, my father, who was the manager/accountant of a bicycle spare parts factory was paid Rs 400 a month, it was never enough. Soon my 'fame' spread and other dads wanted their sons to be tutored. I usually finished my years' worth of studying during the summer vacation and never needed to study after that, except for homework. I kept saying yes. In the end I was teaching five students, two in the morning and three in the evening. I did this from 9th grade to all the way to the final year of my Bachelor's degree at Govt College, Ludhiana. All of the other fathers were not as rich as Mr Sial, but they all lived in Model Town and their sons ferried me from one house to another on their scooters! However, all of them gave me a raise every year. In fact, I agreed to father number five with great reluctance, but he insisted and offered me Rs 40 in year one, raising it yearly. But not Mr Sial. His son knew how much monthly I was getting from others, he must have told his dad. But in all the three years I taught him, I never got more than Rs 20 per month. He was not miserly, I could see how much money he was spending on his son and his fat wife and fat daughter. He simply wanted to extract the maximum benefit from my labor and pay me as little as possible, ie capitalist. At the time it did not occur to me that I should demand more money and if I don't get it, walk out and work for somebody else in Model Town. I was extremely grateful to him for giving me my first job and never complained. He clearly knew that and exploited that weakness to maximize his gain, ie capitalist. I have met many more and I can recognize them now, but he was the first :) PS: The picture shows me with books as prizes in my first year of college. I won first prize in every subject I took. You can see

that I am malnourished and could have used the money :)

My First Communist :) There was a nominal communist in our family, my uncle Amarnath (Amar Singh) Bhamra. He was my elder uncle, the younger one being Om Prakash Bhamra 'Rahi' Jamalpuri (who sadly passed away recently). Amarnath uncle was trained as a Turner/Fitter and worked all his life in sugar mills. He was a member of the local trade union affiliated with the All India Trade Union Congress. He never talked politics at home, but my father told me that when he was drunk, he could make very fiery speeches and was a minor leader in the union. I do not believe he was serious about it. The first real communist I met was my roommate for five years (1969-1974) in Pittsburgh, Shashikant Phatak. He told me that he came from a high class Maharashtrian Brahmin family. He also told me that he was 'converted' in one day, by his senior in Ruia college, Hemu Pradhan, a brilliant student who went to MIT, returned to India and made his name in Science Education. While I was holding meetings in our apartment to study the teachings of Swami Vivekananda, he and his friends held meetings about how to change the world, it was the Sixties! We often discussed politics, he pointed out what was wrong with the capitalist system, I pointed out the stuff happening in the Soviet Union and China. He told me that what was practiced in those two countries was not 'true' communism at all. The only true communists in the world, he said, were the Cubans and the North Vietnamese! I did not have any strong political views at that time, but he called me 'pichhan khichoo' (reactionary, a Punjabi word he picked up from my other friends) and I called him a 'left-wing extremist'. He liked the fact that I was a fan of Noam Chomsky and I liked the fact that he liked the poem 'Sagara Pran Talmalala' by that arch-reactionary Veer Savarkar! On the whole, we got along well, we changed many apartments near the University of Pittsburgh campus, but always remained together as roommates. He cooked food, I cleaned the dishes. Barber shops were expensive, so we let our hair grow for six months and then cut each other's hair. He bought a used car, I bought a new Black and White TV. I have been told that that TV worked for about 10 years after I left Pittsburgh (1975) and changed hands many times before being discarded. Neither of us was able to convert the other. One time, another classmate of ours, R Balasubramaniam, a First Class First from Nagpur University had the misfortune (or good fortune) of traveling in a car with Shashikant and his communist friends on a trip to New York and back. R Balasubramaniam returned from the trip totally converted to their brand of communism :) Soon after that RB quit Physics, joined the Computer Science Dept at the nearby Carnegie-Mellon University, got a Masters degree, got a job and made a lot of money, while I and my communist roommate were still graduate students. Amen. The photo shows Shashikant

(right) probably making tea, with another friend.

Dowry and Me :) When you are young you want to change the world. I and my friend Abnash also wanted to do that but learned quickly (1968) that that was not going to happen. So, we decided to change ourselves. We pledged that we will not take even a paisa in dowry when we get married. I went to the US (1969) and when I returned (1975) he had fallen in love with an Anthropology student from Lucknow. He had two tasks: 1. To convince his mom and sisters that they should let him marry a non-Panjabi and non-Khatri girl. 2. To convince the girl-friend's parents to let him marry her without any dowry. I was there with him most of the time. It was a big mess, lots of crying, shouting, but he did succeed in getting everyone to agree to the marriage by using the Mountbatten strategy (to convince Patel first and use him to convince the others!). But the bride's father absolutely refused not to give dowry. More hectic negotiations, crying, and shouting followed. In the end, Abnash agreed to take only what was the absolute minimum dowry in the customs of the Lucknow Brahmins. I had already decided that I will let my father find a bride for me, good. When I mentioned to my father that I do not want any dowry, he said that he did not care but I would have to convince Harmesh's father. I tried different scenarios in my mind but I kept remembering all the ruckus that Abnash had to go through, so I kept postponing talking to her father. Marriage was fixed for April 28. Around the first week of March, I finally got the courage to write him a letter from Shillong saying that I have something important to say about the whole marriage thing. And I would write about that in my second letter. You see, I was trying break it to him gently :) In the end, I chickened out and never wrote the second letter about No Dowry. The marriage took place without incident on April 28, 1977 in New Delhi.. During the next vacation, when I visited New Delhi, my father-in-law told me that I had created quite a scare with my letter. I asked him why. He said your letter could mean only one thing, the America-returned would-be son-in-law would be demanding a fridge, a TV, a car and heaven knows what else in the next letter. He said that they spent the next seven weeks worried sick about it. When I told him that I was going to write to him about my No Dowry Pledge, everybody had a good laugh!

So, this song from Love in Simla (1960), starring Sadhna, is coming on TV, Harmesh says, didn't she make another one in 1960. I said Parakh (1960). She said perhaps one more. I said, I will check in the Hindi Film Geet Kosh and started walking towards my bedroom copy of the 5-volume work. Harmesh: Surjit Singh saradaar, ghoDe panj, bandookhaan chaar (O Surjit Singh of the five horses and four gunmen, her mock for me when I, a retired Theoretical Physicist, have made or about to make a stupid mistake),

where are you going? HK: Haven't you put it on the internet? Is there something wrong with it? Walked back to the bed, opened the HFGK database page on the films. I want her in acting role only, so went to Advanced Search, chose Cast from the Element, Contains from the Condition and typed saadhanaa in the Value. Then added another row for the Censor Year, Contains 1960, clicked Apply, and I got 8 films! Running down the list, I saw Love in Simla and Parakh. In one of the films the name was Saadhanaa Chatarjee. In the remaining five films, Black Tiger, Rikshawala, and Shareef Daku, Saadhanaa is listed. So, we have three films in which Saadhanaa is listed. All could be the famous one, or there could be 1, 2 or 3 different ones.

"My first film in a cinema hall was Shrimatiji (1952). From the beginning I have been fascinated with the whole film making process, the financing, producing, directing, acting, editing, lyrics writing, singing, musical direction, casting, and so on. I wondered about the non-stars who played supporting roles, filled the scenery or appeared in the dances. My uncle would tell me about the character artists, Hiralal, Madan Puri, Brahm Bhardwaj, Protima Devi, Praveen Paul and others. When the Internet came and I joined the Usenet discussion group RMIM (rec.music.misc.indian), I made many friends, some of whom lived in Bombay and had stories to tell about them. Eventually the group moved to Facebook, where I found many other groups. One of them, THOSE WHO COUDNT MAKE IT BIG BUT IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE WITH OUT THEM, was very active in seeking out information about all these non-stars. One of the members is the main author of this book. I watched all the activities of Upendra on that group with great interest. I soon found out he lived in the area and went to the University of California, San Diego. We met each other and I gave him a copy of my film collection. He really dug into the collection spending countless hours recognizing, finding and listing, not only the usual character artists, but also the Junior Artists! Once I realized what he had done, I suggested that all this go into a book. When looked at the amount of hard work he had done, we decided to split it into two books."

When the pandemic came I was very scared, I still am, but less. So I did everything that any doctor said to do. In the morning, with the mask on, I ran to the outside, got the Lansing State Journal, threw away all but the comic pages, the puzzle pages and the Parade magazine into the recycling and saved the rest. Washed my hands thoroughly. I have more than 500 crosswords to solve, more than 70 comic pages and Parade magazines to read. Quiz: If I do two a day, how many days before I catch up?

Many years ago a well-wisher remarked that my website, full of

information about HINDI films should be in Hindi, at least a translation should be provided. The website has too much info, would have been time-consuming to do it, so I added Google Translate, included some Indian languages, checked a few pages and rested. Recently when I put information about Master Ebrahim, the Forgotten Ace Clarinetist, it was pointed out to me that Google was rendering the word Clarinet as Shehnai!. I looked, it was doing the same thing for all the Indian languages. [It reminded me of Out of Sight Out of Mind = Blind Idiot legend.] Ghor Arth Kaa Anarth :) So, I wrote a note to the Google team, and, added the following Note to the English pages. "NOTE: If you are reading in non-English languages, please note that Google is translating CLARINET as SHEHNAI. He used to play the instrument called CLARINET. So please read CLARINET instead of SHEHNAI." I was not sure what Google Translate would do (it could do Clarinet = Shehnai again!) but I was happy to see this in Hindi "नोट: यदि आप गैर-अंग्रेजी भाषाओं में पढ़ रहे हैं, तो कृपया ध्यान दें कि Google क्लैरिनेट का अनुवाद शहनाई के रूप में कर रहा है। वह क्लैरिनेट नामक वाद्य यंत्र बजाता था। इसलिए कृपया शहनाई की जगह क्लैरिनेट पढ़ें।"

Within a few minutes of talking to my wife one would realize that she is not from a small village but from a big city. Examples. I lost my pen, she asks, kee DhoonDh rahe o [I would have used labbh or bhaaL rahe]. I say, meraa pen kho gayaa. She says, bed neeche dekho [I would have used thalle or heThaan, and manjaa not bed]. As everybody knows I make lunch and it is a fruit plate. Usually she stays in bed, but at one time she came to the kitchen and saw me cutting fruit. She says, you cut fruit in the bidesee way. How so, I ask. She says, I keep the apple in my hand and cut, you put it on the plate and cut. I said that's how I saw on the TV shows! We had just moved to San Diego from Lubbock and there is a knock on the door. She looks through the keyhole and says, koe bedesee ne, tuseen dekho. I looked, there was an elderly white couple at the door. They were from a nearby church to welcome us and invite us to their church. In such cases I use one of two speeches. 1. Your cowardly God sent his son, our God himself came 10 times. 2. I am a devout Sikh and we do not change our religion even when faced with death threats, for example our Guru numbers 5 and 9. Coming back to bidesee, I remarked, my dear, in this country, white people are desee and we are bidesee. She says, we were, are and will remain desee forever and these guys will always be bidesee. QED.

Ram Laxman original name Vijay Patil passed away yesterday. He is the Laxman, Ram was Surendra Hendre, who unfortunately passed away soon after joining the joDee (in 1975). The information and the picture is from the Facebook page of MD Soni and a comment by Pavan Jha. Thanks both. Around mid-70s I started ignoring new films and went from cinema to

cinema in Bombay to see as many old movies I could find and took notes. My wife turned out to have similar tastes. So, in Shillong, we saw mostly old movies. We did see a few new ones from recommendation from our cousins in Gauhati. One such was Tarana! Film seemed to be a remake of Dulari (1949) and we liked all the songs mainly by Shailendra and Usha! Never heard her like this. We saw the film three times mainly for the songs. When a pirated audio tape of Tarana came, we bought it and wore it out. Even (Professor) Jaideep (Singh, Experimental Physics, MSU) liked it and kept singing Sultana, Sultana, Sultana, all day! We may have him on tape, I will try to locate. Believe it not, this was the first ever Silver Jubilee film in Shillong. So, we had a quiz competition in Shillong to assess who knew more about Shillong than anybody else. There were questions about History, Geography, Politics, Economy etc. of Shillong, but there was one, Which film is the first ever to have a Silver Jubilee in Shillong? Of course, I stood up, raised my hand and shouted the answer. I am not sure, but I think I won the contest.

Raajkumar Keswani (26 November 1950 – 21 May 2021) was a senior journalist and true crazy movie fan. He passed away a few days ago due to COVID-19 related complications. Earlier he tested positive (April 8), recovered (April 20) and then was admitted to hospital during April-end. I first saw him on RMIM around 2005. Seemed to be a very knowledgeable person. A few years later we started emailing each other. That's when I learned that he was the Bhopal journalist who had warned that the Union Carbide plant was sitting on a volcano ready to erupt 3-4 years before the tragedy actually happened. He was on the fore front of reporting about it and guided and educated the foreign reporters who won numerous prizes for their work. He kept sending me copies of film-related columns, which I commented on and enjoyed reading thoroughly. His attention to detail in such matters was rare. When he mentioned that had also written a few books, I asked for details so that I could buy them. But he insisted that I give him my address and he would send them to me. This was 12-13 years ago. He signed the copies with special remarks, all different. I am honored to be called 'one crazy cine buff' by such a stalwart. Most recently I had the honor to attend a video event about his latest best seller on the film Mughal-e-Azam. Here I actually saw him in action. I came away with the impression that even though he had spent most of his life in a big city (Bhopal) but he behaved and talked like a simple, honest, fearless, plain-spoken and full of humor villager, somewhat like me, if I am allowed to say. Finger refuses to type more, very sad to see him go so soon, he will be sorely missed.

The famous Clock Tower (Ghanta Ghar) of Ludhiana. To the right is

Chowda Bazar (wide market, mis-named). Going up, there was Minerva Cinema to the right, the oldest. Go left, there was Society Cinema (we used to call it the New Cinema). Walk down, and you reach Raikhy and Naulakha Cinemas. Further down the road, Laxmi Cinema, which actually was the newest (in 1957, my father worked on the construction). With five cinemas within walking distance, this could be called the Lamington Road (=Dr. Dadasaheb Bhadkamkar Marg) of Ludhiana. I saw lots of films there from 1959 to 1966.

I was talking to an old friend the other day and telling him about my recent spate of books, roughly one in two months. He said, bakwaas, your name says one thing and you are doing another. He talks like that, I don't mind, so I said How So? He said you publish under the name of professor "toofaanii" publishers, your edit Wikipedia under the name "Toofani" Tarzan, but your speed in nothing as compared with a Toofaan. If you really were toofaanii, you would be publishing two books every week! As that guy Polonius (not Mel Gibson) said: "This above all: to thine own self be true" I am taking steps to remedy that.

I made a mistake! I have written about a few mistakes I made in life, here is another one. Note: Some of the info comes from talks with my father Prithvipal Singh and my brother Daljit Singh. In the city of Malerkotla, in the early 20th century, there was a Hindu carpenter named Daulat Ram Kalsi. In a nearby village Jamalpura, there was another one called Ram Ratan Bhamra. Besides doing carpentry, they wrote poetry, played alghozas and were very good friends. When Ram Ratan had a boy and Daulat Ram had a daughter later, they decided the two children will get married when they grow up. That's how marriages were arranged then. During my father's time (1940s), marriages were still arranged but they let the children wait till they were of age to decide. During neither of these instances, the boy and the girl saw each other until the wedding day. During my time (1970s), we were actually allowed to meet and talk (in the presence of elders) and even had a veto to reject the proposal! In fact one girl rejected me even after we had been engaged for about two weeks and all the gifts were returned. So, I met Harmesh on January 1, 1977 and we were engaged. Around January 15, I traveled by train to Bombay to spend the next month in TIFR, as I would do every year until 1983. We got married on April 28 and around December 15 we came to New Delhi, my sasural, from Shillong. I told my father-in-law about the 2-month winter vacation and our plan to spend 2 weeks with my family, 2 weeks with them, one month in TIFR, and then back to Shillong. He asked if I did the same thing last January. I said yes. He said, you mean to tell me that you passed through New Delhi and you did not tell us. I said yes. He said, that's too

bad, because you deprived us of royally entertaining you, our son-in-law, and you also missed the chance to take Harmesh out to dinner, movies, parks, if you had stayed with us for a few days. I still regret to this day this stupid mistake; I deprived myself of the girlfriend experience! You see, contrary to some of my still bachelor friends, I have never had a girlfriend :(

I moved to San Diego in 1998, but somehow fate did not want us to meet. I found out about her [Indurani] by chance in 2016. I proposed to write a book on her. Her family must have been skeptical, a retired theoretical physicist (?), what does he know about Hindi film history and about writing books :) But my old pal, Raj Kumar 'Qais' came to the rescue and praised me to the skies. Also, I gave them a copy of my book on Edwina. Phir Kyaa Thaa, they opened up their family history, old pictures, videos. I interviewed the whole family. Here you will find where to buy the book and also find out how to read it free online.

I usually wake up Harmesh at 8:30 AM to alert her that Cafe Latte and breakfast would be served at 9. We usually have a small chit chat. Today I mentioned that a song is going on in my head, "choree choree ik ishaaraa ho gayaa hai". She immediately replied, "dil hamaaraa thaa tumhaaraa ho gayaa hai". I said, My Foot!. She smiled, nodded knowingly and went back to sleep. 1. P-stats is the name given to the details of the songs on the classic RMIM, details such as Movie, Singers, Music Directors, and Lyricist. The original P-stats file was re-compiled and posted on the classic RMIM by Preetham Gopalaswamy, hence the name. The song is from the film Basant (1960).

Yesterday, we had the pleasure of baby-sitting our 5-year old grandson. He and I have many things in common (besides some genes), eg both of us love Mentos! So, I usually hide a couple of them in the kitchen, he loves to find them and eat them. Yesterday also he found and ate them. After a few hours, I kept two more in the same place and said to him, obviously, you took the Mentos but saved them for later. He appeared confused for a few moments and then said with definiteness, I DID eat them. I asked him where the new 2 came from? He said, somebody else must have put them there. I asked him why he thought so, he replied that Mentos don't just appear out of thin air! In physics we say that you cannot have zero mass before and non-zero mass some time later in the same place, everything else remaining the same. I am reminded of the devotees of certain Babas who, in contrast with my 5-year old grandson, have no trouble explaining when their Baba produces expensive watches and other things from thin air, from under his long cape. Their explanation is that the Law of Conservation of Mass is not even valid, as shown by Einstein, it is the Law of Conservation

of Mass-Energy :)

It is December 1976 and I am an eligible bachelor. Lots of proposals about me are coming to my father and he is filtering them. One day he said, there is a proposal from Patiala, the girl is younger than you, but she is a First Class First in MA in Sanskrit from the Punjabi University. I said yes, he fixed a date through the middleman. We went to her house, her family talked to me. As usual, escorted by family members, the girl was brought in, she quietly made tea. All of us had tea and snacks. I asked her some questions, she replied in mono-syllables or nodded her head, keeping her head down. All of them left us alone to consult. I mentioned her behavior to my father, he said, she is just shy, to you, an America-returned, all girls will seem like this. Indian girls are different. I said yes, rings were exchanged without a word, gifts given. Nobody took pictures. About a week later, her father showed up and said, sorry, we have to break-off the engagement. Gifts and rings were anti-exchanged. My father asked what happened. The father from Patiala said that our girl says that his hair is too short :) My father just smiled. A few weeks later, the middleman showed up and said that the girl was deeply in love with another boy from Patiala and her parents engaged her to you against her will! Narrow escape, or jaan bachee aur laakhon paaye, I said to myself. Or, as Ketan aptly put it Baal Baal Bach Gaye! PS: I did return from the US with very long hair (hippie age, you know) but had it cut recently. It grew back :) PPS: With New Delhi vaalee, a few months after marriage.

In preparation for the book, SS watched more than one hundred videos of her (put together by Tom Daniel), he was struck by the other faces in the background who danced in many of these songs. It occurred to him that a book should be written about them while we can still identify them. So, SS requested his friend Narsingh D Agnish to watch all the videos and capture still images of her co-dancers. He painstakingly captured almost 1,000 images, of which about 500 were selected to be sent to Edu by email. She responded promptly identifying most of them and writing little notes about them in the bargain! We have selected about 300 of those images for this book. We are thrilled that we have been able to put names to so many faces of her co-dancers. All three of us loved working on this book, we hope you will enjoy it too and have the excitement of saying, "I know her, she is Pamela, Edu's best friend. Or, I recognize him, he is Terence, Edu's brother!" It was supposed to be a gift for her 80th birthday, but we announced it earlier because of her India trip.

I do not believe in punarjanm (reincarnation) stuff. Heck, I don't even believe in god, most of the time. When I am really really really in trouble, I

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

get down on my knees and pray to god, sorry, god, I was kidding the other day when I said that I don't believe in you, in fact, I really do, anyway, you being all-knowing know it already. However, things that my grandmother taught me and told me are instinctive with me. Recently, I made a new friend, and we wondered how we became good friends in such a short time. I said without thinking, "laiN deN daa sabandh ai" (we must have owed stuff to each other in a previous birth, so we are born to square the accounts). Ishwra Devi (1903-1996), my father's mom, reading probably from Sundar Gutka (Beautiful booklet), a compendium of 5 items from Guru Granth.

An 80 year old Catholic, an 81 year old Hindu and a 73 year old Sikh walk into a bar. Later, they manage to survive a once-in-a-century pandemic and write a book together about 100 hitherto unknown group dancers. The book

There must have been many short stories in my English books from grades 6-11 and in the Bachelor degree course. However, this is the para that resonated with me then and still does, "In this world of human affairs there is no worse nuisance than a boy at the age of fourteen. He is neither ornamental nor useful. It is impossible to shower affection on him as on a little boy; and he is always getting in the way. If he talks with a childish lisp he is called a baby, and if he answers in a grown-up way he is called impertinent. In fact any talk at all from him is resented. Then he is at the unattractive, growing age. He grows out of his clothes with indecent haste; his voice grows hoarse and breaks and quavers; his face grows suddenly angular and unsightly. It is easy to excuse the shortcomings of early childhood, but it is hard to tolerate even unavoidable lapses in a boy of fourteen. The lad himself becomes painfully self-conscious. When he talks with elderly people he is either unduly forward, or else so unduly shy that he appears ashamed of his very existence. "

I am feeling very stupid today. This article was posted by a friend. I started to read it. The first sentence has this, "The fact that horses were not part of the real life of most people in India". I have absolutely no idea how social scientists can make definite statements like this. What kind of methods they use to arrive such a conclusion, what kind of evidence they accept or reject? Horses vs other animals. Real life vs fake life. Most people vs people of the Punjab. India today vs India of whatever time period she has in mind, she does not say. Do I really need a PhD in Social Science to understand all this?

Just like Rajendra Bora Saab (from Jodhpur, now in Jaipur), I had also

decided not to buy any more books. But my promise was about books ordered directly from India. I must have ordered scores of books until about 2010 from D.K. Agencies, New Delhi. They found books for me from obscure sources, like Narendra Shrimali's book and sent to me. And then suddenly, the postage rates from India became very high, almost 2 times the cost of the book. I still bought Indian books, but asked my brother or other friends to keep them for me in India. But then I saw a book on Rajasthani Cinema, I had to have it and today! I wrote to University Book House, Ashish Jain replied, I sent them \$30 (\$11 book, \$19 postage). I am very happy that ordered it. *Rajasthani Cinema: A Critical Study* by Dr Rakesh Kumar Goswami (2020), 182 pages, Hard Bound, Black and White, Rs 795. un_bookhouse@yahoo.com The author gives us a summary of world cinema, gives us a brief tour of Indian cinema before getting to the subject proper. He introduces Rajasthan and its languages, gives an overall history of Rajasthani Cinema, less than 150 films until 2014. Then follows a detailed filmography (everything except songs), with lots of posters and photos from booklets. Next chapter includes detailed analysis of some landmark films. Lots of references. Then, a very important Annexure Section, filled with biographies and interviews with many important people connected with the Rajasthani Cinema. On the whole a very good book full of rare information not available elsewhere. I understand MD Soni provided a lot of meticulous information for the book. Thank you very much Soni Saab. Very deservedly, there is a 7-page chapter on MD Soni's life and his services to the Rajasthani Cinema compilations. Is there a shortcoming in the book? Yes, there is. It is well-known that Vol 4 (1961-1970), Vol 5 (1971-1980) and Vol 6 (1981-1985) of the world-famous Hindi Film Geet Kosh (HFGK) by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz', Bishwanath Chatterjee, and Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz', respectively, have Geet Kosh type information on many regional films, including Rajasthani. It is customary in academic work (and the book is definitely academic) to include references to all the previous work on the subject and discuss them. Sadly, it has not been done in this book. One can only speculate why that is so. I would definitely recommend this book for the filmographies and the interviews, but I would recommend getting HFGK volumes 4-6 also for the sake of completeness.

A brave man with an even braver very pregnant wife travels abroad to attend a film festival. Naturally, his wife gives birth to a son along the way, who, naturally, acquires a dual nationality! ANS: I did not know either. I found out because I am editing a book on Dev Anand. The answer is Dev Anand, Kalpana Kartik, Karlovy Vary, Zurich, Suneil Anand, June 30, 1956.

Some pitfalls and lessons learned. We moved to CA in 1998 and lived in

a rented apartment. It is called La Terraza and true to its name, it was terraced. Our unit was not on the street, it was a few yards and curves away. Of course, our garage was on the street. I had given my old TV to starving students back in Lubbock, so I ordered a new 36" Toshiba (still working, bye the way). My wife calls in the office and says TV came and delivery guys want to talk to you. They said they can deliver only on a street doorstep and that was the agreement. [I had obviously not read it assuming it to be the usual one. Lesson, read everything carefully.] After some discussion, I said leave it in the garage. How to open the garage? I had the only opener [They had offered us two, my wife does not drive much, we took only one. Lesson, when free things are offered, take all and decide later.] I was extremely busy and could not come. I never wrote down the building office number anywhere because I can just walk to it. Lesson, write down all phone numbers in many places. So my wife walked to the office, they came, opened the garage and the TV is in the garage. I return from office. It is too heavy even if all three [Me, Harmesh, Rajdeep] try to carry it. Lesson, write down the weight of heavy items. So I call up moving people, they laugh when I tell them what they need to do. Finally, a starving student agrees. He does not ask me for weight and I thought he knows what to do. [Lesson never assume professionals even doctors or physicists know what they are doing, always ask questions, even the stupid ones.] He tries to carry it by himself, gives up after a few steps. Says sorry, need to bring moving trolley. He comes back, brings TV in and puts on the floor. Later we go buy a TV stand and have to wait till Jaideep comes home to visit from Caltech. With one quick move, he puts the TV on the stand! Lesson, have a strong child! This could be made into a one-reeler sort, like those silent comedies of yore.

Seven years! The CRT TV finally quit after 23 years. Jaideep gave us his spare flat screen.

First film of Dev Anand I saw was Jali Note (1960). I was in the eighth grade and saw it during school hours. Fell in love with all three, Dev Anand, Madhubala and Helen. I was told there would be lots of college girls, there were :)

About 35 years ago, N David Mermin wrote an article in Physics Today, "Is the moon there when nobody looks? Reality and the quantum theory" My wife and I have been discussing a similar question every year for about 44 years, "Is the moon there if there is a thick cloud cover and/or it is raining?" I usually say, of course, it is there. If it is about 30 minutes after moonrise and we are looking in the right direction. She says, how can you be so sure? I tried to explain it by saying that quantum corrections are

negligible for macroscopic bodies, gravity is still active (we are not flying away), and, the reflected light of the moon has been absorbed by the clouds/rain, so nothing reaches our eyes. She remains skeptical. To try to convince her I did an experiment. I looked up the Almanac and noted down the moonrise times for about 7 days preceding the Great Annual Indian Fast Day. Everyday, both of us went out at the appropriate time to look for the moon. It was not there! She said, see? I explained that the almanac moonrise time is for the horizon, it takes some time for the moon to rise above the trees and the houses. We waited. It did come out after about 30 minutes. We did this daily and noted down the time difference. On the appointed day, it came out roughly when we expected it. She said OK and seemed convinced that it is there even if we cannot see it. We do this every year when we suspect that it is going to be cloudy/rainy on the Great Day. Yesterday, it was cloudy/rainy and we could not see it. The almanac time was 9:00 pm. So, at 9:30 pm I said, it must be there, let us eat. She said, let us eat at 10 pm to be on the safe side :) I believe this is the Pakistani actor Darpan, as seen in Adal-e-Jahangir (1955). Please confirm.

In the prehistoric, the Classic RMIM era, we had only text-based USENET posts. I decided to start my website to allow people to give me audio/video/images to post. One of the people who responded was Jayaraman of Dombivli. During December 2005, he sent to me, at his own expense, a mix tape of songs, all the way from Mumbai to San Diego, by Registered Post. He requested me to put the songs on my website, I did.

In Lansing, MI, lights go out once or twice a year during severe weather, and they take 3-4 hours to fix the problem. So, we bought a natural gas generator to power the whole house during such events. Two guys came and it took them about 6 hours to install and test. In the end, one of them explained to me how to operate it and showed me a green light on the side. He said if this light is red, you have to reset it. I said I am inside the house, how would I see it. He said a wireless gadget will come in the mail, call me to install, then you can see it on your cellphone. The gadget came, and being a nerd and a sardarji, I know how to follow instructions, I installed it all by myself. Coming back to the living room I proudly announced, Our Generator is now fully operational,....., unlike the Death Star, which never was. What kind of world do we live in, in which a Star Wars reference does not elicit a response!

SpotifyFilm aficionado Prof Surjit Singh with Irfan

It was an honor to talk to Shree Syed Mohd Irfan of Guftagoo fame.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

My boss, Prof G Wilse Robinson often used to say, Whatever is worth doing at all, is worth doing well. I asked him where the quote was from. He said that this was said in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* by Marilyn Monroe to Jane Russell when they were trying to take off the pants of the side-hero in order to retrieve a film roll.

I discovered the Mother of all discussion groups RMIM on Indian films and music in early 1995. After lurking (viewing posts quietly) for a few months, I noticed that these 'kids' (the most active ones were in the 20s, I was about 50) did not talk much about the 30s and 40s. So I decided to write a series of posts on Hindi films. This was the first one published on July 10, 1995.

In the 60s your company sent this gentleman to India as a color consultant to Bollywood film producers. I would greatly appreciate if you could tell me more about him or/and introduce me to anyone who knows. Thanks, I am afraid that there is no one left in this company who knows about him. I am the last one that knows of his existence but I never met him. The first film he assisted on was Mehboob Khan's *Mother India*. He worked on over 100 film and returned to Belgium in 1972 after finalising his last film *Reshma Aur Shera* which was released after his return to Belgium where he died a couple of years later. If there is someone who still knows something more about this man then I think you should look in India. I am thinking about the Patel family (Filmcenter) in Mumbai or Ramesh Prasad (Prasad Laboratories) in Madras. There is also a possibility that RN Viswanathan knows him. I lost track of Mr Viswanathan who on a certain moment lived on the "Palm Meadows" resort in Bangalore. Laundry was piled up and I was forced to wear some very old ragged pajamas. Finally she started it and walked to pick it up, I walked next to her. She took out and gave me fresh new fluffy pajamas to wear. I said, PS: If you think that stool softener is used to make bar furniture malleable, wait till you are old :)

When I was a student at the University of Pittsburgh in the seventies, one day I was continuously humming the popular Salilda song "itanaa naa mujh se tuu pyaar ba.Dhaa" rendered beautifully by Shahanshah-e-Ghazal Talat. My classmate and friend Mr. Barry Wasser (BW) said, "Why are you humming Mozart's Symphony Number 40?" The conversation went like this: Me: Is Mozart the cheese you put on pizza and is symphony you use when you can't get chutney? BW: No, Mozart is a famous classical composer and symphony is a style of orchestration. Me: In that case, this is a famous tune composed by famous Indian classical composer, Salil

Chaudhary. BW: Well, he must have based it on Mozart's work because Mozart flourished in the eighteenth century in Austria. Me: Fine, but the Indian classical music is much older than that and it is based on a system of melodious grouping of notes called the ragas. I am sure that Salilda the Indian guy based it on one of the classical Indian ragas. He seemed satisfied and so did I. In those days they believed anything an Indian said. Remember the flying Mahesh Yogi? There the matter rested, until recently, when I read an old interview with Salilda. The interview appeared in the Filmfare of February 27, 1959. He was replying to a criticism that the film music directors had abandoned the classical traditions in favor of Western music. Here is part of what he said. Paraphrasing is mine. The songs for the masses composed during the freedom struggle and also the music composed during and for the terrorist movement in Bengal, like marching tunes of Western music, could be sung by people marching in procession. The present critics of the film music accepted those innovations as based on Indian ragas. This is so because our raga classification is so vast that almost any melody from any part of the world can be classified as a raga or a misra-raga. Thus the film music directors, without dissociating themselves from the classical traditions, argued for their right to innovate and extend the possibilities of Indian music in accordance with public mood and demand. My questions to the raga gurus are these. Was Salilda right about the vastness of Indian ragas? If yes, what raga is Mozart's Symphony Number 40 based on?

"our raga classification is so vast that almost any melody from any part of the world can be classified as a raga or a misra-raga." Today I present a contrary point of view, which is actually closer to my own opinion. Recently, thanks to Pavan Jha and Falguni Trivedi Shah, I received a wonderful book titled, Hindi Film Sangeet Ka Safar, Meel Ke Patthar (Hindi), by Vijay Verma. I like the book very much and recommend everybody to get a copy. On Page 333, shown here, Vermaji says, In 'Dhunon Kee Yatraa' Pankaj Rag, in his well-written chapter centered on Hemant Kumar, has counted about 30 of his songs in Hindi films as based on Ragas. But here I would beg to differ a bit. The question is, did we ourselves find a Raga in an already completed song, or, the composer himself has composed the song keeping in mind that Raga? If we try to find a Raga, and do not hesitate to stretch things, we can find Ragas everywhere or we can impose Ragas on everything, but this is not meant by a song-based-on-a-Raga. To which I commented, "You didn't react when she learned C? 😊" It is very popular there! Too many likes.

Books, not just religious books, were sacred in our house. If a book fell down, my grandmother picked it up, dusted it, touched it to her forehead

and asked for forgiveness. It probably goes back to early twentieth century when books were rare and expensive, Growing up under the care of my grandmother I believed the books to hold the absolute truth. Sadly, this dream was broken in the sixth grade. From my write-up on my website, "Couple of incidents remain stuck in memory. In one lengthy but not difficult mathematics problem involving simple and compound interests over varying periods, the answer in the back of the book did not agree with what I had obtained. I tried very hard to find my mistake. Finally, I asked the brightest city boy and he calmly declared that the book was wrong! It was a revelation that printed word can be wrong. Skepticism started. Recently, a classmate of mine from the Jain school days, Shri Dhaniram Goyal 'found' me and we renewed our friendship by recalling the old days from 1954-1957. He reminded me the name of this bright fellow, to whom I am forever indebted. His name is Kewal Krishan." Still, newspapers were respected and believed. As Boraji says in the shared article, we used to settle arguments by saying, "are bhai akhbar men likha hai, ye dekho!" [It is written in the paper, look here.] Sadly, even that is gone now, as Rajendra Boraji explains, in his essay, Media in the Market, Mande Men Baithaa Media.

I am member of a Facebook group on Mathematics. One of their recurring themes is to make fun of others. In one post somebody showed a Mathematician in 'pain' on seeing a Physicist doing calculus (ie just plow through and worry about rigor later). I posted, "I am a physicist, by doing calculus our way, we have given you the nuclear age, the space age, the digital age, the internet age etc. just in the last century 😊" The post has become very popular, more than 50 likes, some LOLs, most people realized it was TIC, but I met a few you-know-whos also :)

Last Friday, I made a paper-folding toy for Benjamin (now 6 yrs old), we used to call it Raat-Din (Night and Day). I told him how we did not have money to buy ink or crayons, so we collected soot from lamps and mixed it with water to make black ink. How we colored only one half with black ink and quickly changed from Night to Day. He watched and listened to me and then destroyed the moment with, I have lived more than 60% of my life now in the US and Canada and had never heard of this expression, you learn new things everyday, even from six-year olds :)

Before I saw my first film, Shreematiji (1952), I saw bioscope show many times, earliest from 1950-51. The songs played were from Awara (1951). The knobs are used to move the images. The operator would shout Dilli Ka Kutb Minar Dekho, Agre Ka Taj Mahal Dekho etc. He will always show a scantily dressed fat white lady reclining in her bedroom with her

fanny covered by a Japanese style folding fan. He would linger on the photo and say, Barah Man Ki Dhoban Dekho! (see the 12 mound washerwoman) Then, mischievously ask, pakkhi kitthe ai (where is the fan?), we all shouted in unison, aanne vaalee thaane te (where the money is)!

I am sure there were shops like this playing radio Ceylon in the late fifties and sixties in every town. We had a few in Maler Kotla and one not far from our house in Ludhiana that we went to. We lived on Shahpur road and there was a famous paan-soda shop on the corner of Karimpura Bazar and Jail Road, not far from where Sahir Ludhianvi was brought up, there is still a Masjid nearby. I went to that shop with my father many times a month to listen to radio and drink lemon soda from bottles with a crinkled neck with a marble. Here Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' is being interviewed by Vebhuti Duggal for her Dissertation, 2015 JNU (THE COMMUNITY OF LISTENERS: WRITING A HISTORY OF HINDI FILM

Executive Summary: I came up with a common cold on May 5, my common projects are being delayed. Lesson 2: Always do what your spouse says. Details: On May 5, soon after lunch, I started sneezing and had a runny nose. Next morning, I started to get ready to go to an Urgent Care Center, my wife says, just go to the pharmacy and talk to them. I said I may have Covid, I should be careful. She said, no, you don't have Covid. I went anyway. There were about 15 people waiting and I guessed more inside. I quietly walked out and went to the pharmacy! The druggist suggested Claritin, I bought and went home. I told her what happened, she just smiled. By the evening, sore throat appeared. Again I started to get dressed to go to the Urgent Care. My wife said, why don't you get some cold medicine like you used to get in India? I said, Dristan? They have never heard of it. She said, may be the one in Waterloo or Lubbock, what was it called, Corisadeen something? Oh Coridin? No, I may have Covid, I should go. Anyway I went there around 6 pm. Only one person ahead of me. I was tested for Flu A/B and Covid. Both negative :) The doctor said because you have high blood pressure I recommend Coricidin Cough and Cold! Called Harmesh, and I asked guess what doctor recommended, she said, triumphantly, Coricidin! Conclusion: Message to everybody who has a common project with me. Sorry, all projects delayed. If you think your project is super important and must not be delayed, call me so that I can shout in your ear, All Projects Delayed! Lesson 2: Always do what your spouse says. What is Lesson 1 you ask. Oh, I learned that soon after my marriage more than 45 years ago. If you are talking to your wife and cannot think of what to say, just repeat gently as many times as needed Yes dear, you are right dear, I agree with you dear!

When that Julie song (My Heart is Beating) came, many ignorant people said that that was the first English song in a Hindi film. Many websites still say that. People with a little more knowledge pointed to the poem read by Shanta Apte in Duniya Na Mane (1937) and many people still believe that. However, people who have the first volume of Hindi Film Geet Kosh know that the first English song in a Hindi film is from Karma (1933) sung by Devika Rani. All songs of this film, including the English song, can be heard here (in the Girdharilal Vishwakarma Collection) Disclaimer: We know that full information of Indian films is not available, many early films are lost, records were not made, magazines and books do not mention every single film ever certified, therefore, the first of anything must remain tentative, as of now, based on the present information.

Just for fun, I sent the following email to J C Penney customer support. Will let you know what, if anything happens :) "I am nor sure if anybody even reads or cares for this, but I thought I should put in on record. Hopefully it will help you improve your processes. If not, oh well :) 1. I ordered an item for curbside pickup. It came, I went to pickup. The lady at the other end said she cannot come out, I have to go inside. This, in the middle of a pandemic. I cancelled the order. 2. I ordered an item, I checked on the website on my account, it said Transit To Store for more than a month. Finally I called, with great difficulty found a human to talk to who happily told me the item was available the next day, I did not pick up, it was returned and money refunded. All true, but I never got an email or a phone call asking me to pick up! This has never happened with Amazon or Walmart, think about that :)"

About 23 years ago, an RMIMer is visiting Delhi. He sees a notice of a program on Saigal. Being an RMIMer, he is naturally a fan of Saigal 😊 So, he decides to attend it and is surprised to see impeccably dressed Govt. servants!! He meets many people but develops a special friendship with one of them who surprises him by telling him that apart from the 2 well-known songs of Master Madan (yuuN na and hairat se), SIX more are available!!! Not only that, he gives the songs to him on a tape!!! The RMIMer puts them on his website and distributes a copy of the songs on tapes in an RMIMeeting in Denver in the house of Gurbakshish Singh Bagga (AKA Guri). PS: Jyoti Pande's image shamelessly stolen from Vinay Pande's post. PPS: Contrary to what millions of websites, youtube and social media posts may claim, this was the first time ever those SIX songs were put on the internet, later I put them on my website

When I posted my Master Madan's SIX lost songs story 10 years ago, Jyoti Pandeji remarked, "in fairness , credit goes to shri satish chopra who

gave me the recordings" "... I received from one the ardent lovers of music, named Shri Promod Dwivedi, who got these priceless numbers from Shimla after his vigorous efforts." Thank you Dwivediji for all your hard work, the whole world is enjoying the fruits of your labor.

I first learned about Gurcharan Singh Sandhu of the UK when I bought the revised edition of the Hindi Film Geet Kosh Volume 3 in 1998. His name was written as the Sahayogi (Associate) on the title page. When I talked to Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' he mentioned that Sandhu Sahib traveled from the UK to Kanpur three times to help with the revised edition. Each time he stayed for a week or more and worked day and night to expedite the publication of that volume. Later on he and I exchanged emails and then became Facebook and Whatsapp friends. I learned that we are about the same age and have many common interests. He has been on my A-list ever since. A-listers are people I hold in high regard and to whom I give anything they ask for from my collection, audio, video, books, magazines. About a year ago I found out that he has cancer, and now, after medical treatments having failed, is waiting for the end. We talk often, I try to give suggestions, but, of course, he being in the middle of it all always knows best. In spite of what we know, I find him facing this dire situation remarkably well under the circumstances. He always gives me updates calmly in a firm voice. Listening to him talk, one could never guess that he is the victim of a serious terminal illness. At this time, all we can do is send him our best wishes and hope for a miracle.

I was about 7 when my mother died of TB (1953). We were in Kaithal, Haryana, and were all grieving in our own way. I was sitting quietly in a corner when my grandfather Sh Mansaram came to me and told me that he knew how I felt. He said he has found Gayatri Mantra to be helpful. Later, I found that he was obsessed with the Gayatri Mantra. There was a guy from somewhere in Haryana (then Panjab) who used to publish an annual issue about his research on the Gayatri Mantra. My grandfather subscribed to it and we had dozens of those books at home. I read all of them, did not understand anything :) Anyway, he wrote down the Gayatri Mantra and asked me to memorize it. He said I should recite it six times whenever I am in trouble and it will help me. I have done so all my life. You might say that I am a trained scientist, why should I care. My answer is that I follow Bohr who had a horseshoe on his door with the thinking that it brings good luck whether you believe in it or not :) My grandfather was a member of an amateur theatrical club in Ajmer; in fact, he was the music director. Here he is (right, with glasses) with an unidentified person (my guess is late 1930s).

I am reading the book, Report of the Film Fact Finding Committee,

Govt of Pakistan, 1962. It has a lot of interesting info. On page 165, they discuss how Hollywood regards Pakistani films. They quote from an article published in the Hollywood Trade Journal Variety (Issue number, page number, year is not given).

My wife is watching one of her millions of reality shows on Song/Dance/Idol, I am working on my nth book. I recognize Neetu Singh, then I see another face. Oh, you know her grandmother was the famous Meenaxi Shirodkar from the 30s. (annoyed with please-let-me-watch-my-show look) the guy from Pretty Woman. Added Gurcharan Singh Sandhu from across the pond to My Friends list on my website, please go here for photos and a short video

I was brought up in a village (Jamalpura) where about half the families are Muslim. I had Muslim friends. My grandma had forbidden to eat in their homes, because Muslims ate meat and eggs and were unclean :) My friends' moms offered me youghurt, sweets etc. I ate happily. I learned that if my grandma does not know, I am fine. [This learning came in handy, when, in Ludhiana I saw films during school hours without telling any one.] The village is near a town {Malerkotla} where about half the families are Muslim. The funny thing is no Muslim children went to my school or any other school, except the Islamia schools. The reason, my friends told me, was that they had to learn Urdu and Koran. I never met any Muslim students in Govt College, Ludhiana and Panjab University, Chandigarh. Understandable, because except for the Riyasat of Malerkotla, Muslims were forced out from East Panjab. Did not run into any Muslims anywhere in an academic setting except at Texas Tech University. Prof Arfin Lodhi (from Pakistan) was there. Once, when ECG Sudarshan came to give a seminar, Prof Lodhi invited our family to the dinner he hosted. During conversation, Prof Lodhi remarked, Surjit Singh, I was born in Agra, so I got my Green Card from the Indian quota, reduced your number, ha ha. I replied, I was born in Lahore, so I got my Green Card from the Pakistani quota, reduced your number, double ha ha. professor toofaanii publishers, Lansing, MI, USA, is happy to announce their 36th book Dr Amit Sur and his wife Dr. Shyamali Sengupta Sur were born in Kolkata, India, where they received their Masters degrees in Physics. Then they joined the Physics Dept at the University of Pittsburgh, where I met them in September 1969. We did homework, played cards and scrabble, ate out and saw movies together. They received their PhDs at the University of Pittsburgh. They reside in New York City. This 30-page book is about a family and their children named after the rainbow colors, who seek to understand different religions of the world. As usual, first 10 pages and buying info may be found on my website

My uncle Om Prakash Rahi Jamalपुरी was crazy about films. He was a member of a local amateur theatrical club where he played Sita because of his long hair, he was a turbanned Sikh then. One of his classmates was the son of Dogarmal, owner of the only two cinema halls in Malerkotla. Both of them used to travel to Jullundhur to watch films and select movies from the movie distributors. Because of all this, one year he did not go to school for even one day. He managed to intercept all messages received from the principal to my grandmother. So he failed his tenth class exam in 1954. My father and his father had been in Bihar earning a living. When his father returned, he sat him down for a man to man talk. He said, either pass the tenth this year or forever be known as tenth-fail! So far, his education had been in the Urdu medium, science, history, geography, math, all of it. Suddenly the Education Department required that all high school students must take a Hindi course (national language) and pass it. Poor guy learned Hindi and did pass the tenth. Eventually, much later when middle-aged, he did BA, and MA as a private student (or via Bathinda, as we say in the Panjab!). I was in the 4th grade. For our batches, we already had the three language formula. I started with Panjabi, Hindi in grade 4 and English in grade 6. I have mentioned before that my mother taught me how to read and write Hindi, Panjabi and English and numbers to ten even before I entered grade one. My father had brought a book, Hindi-Bangla Shiksha from Bihar. Within a month, I learned how to read and write Bangla. I surprised my Bangla friends in Pittsburgh by writing their names in Bangla quickly. We used to subscribe to an Urdu magazine called Khilauna (published by the Shama Delhi guys). I mentioned to my uncle that I want to read it. So he bought a Qaida and I learned to read and write Urdu in few months. Later, when I went to Ludhiana, I saw a Hindi Gujarati Shiksha book in the home of my grandmother's brother Pyarelal Kalsi. I learned to read and write Gujarati in a few months. So, by the time I passed grade 8 (in 1960) I had learned to read and write Panjabi, Hindi, English, Urdu, Bangla and Gujarati. When I was in grade 8, I used to amuse my friends by writing their names in various scripts. Once, one of my friends mentioned to the teacher that "Surjit Singh noon bahut boliyaan aaundiyaan ne" (=Surjit Singh knows many boliyaan =[languages].) After some more exchange like that it turned out that the teacher wanted boliyaan like, "baareen baraseen khattan giya see, khatt ke liyaandee chaabee" etc. Photo: Om Prakash Rahi Jamalपुरी hugging his mother Ishwara Devi. I believe all the others are friends of my brother Daljit Singh, January 1995.

The early innocent days of the internet, when stars actually replied. I wrote to Yash Chopra asking about the lady on screen for the song 'aage bhee jaane na too' and he promptly emailed the reply. Shammi Kapoor had

a great personal site. And here Sharmila Tagore answers a question about a book she was reading, in the train. Note: Anirudha Bhattacharjee points out that he was in that group and the email may be fake.

The village Jamalpura is built like a fort, tall walls and two big old castle-type gates. Now the boundary walls have crumbled, but in the old days the two gates were the only entry and exit points. There are no Hindu temples, Sikh Gurdwaras or Jain Sthanaks in the village. The nearest ones were in the city of Malerkotla. However, there are two mosques, one near each gate, issuing calls to prayer that had become part of our lives. Within walking distance from the village, out from the gate towards Khanna Road, there is a very historic place. We used to call it Kookiyaan Daa Kallar (= Infertile Land of the Kookas). The Kookas, of course, are the same as the Namdhari sect of Sikhism, founded by Satguru Balak Singh. They are called Kookas because during their prayer meetings, they would dance wildly shrieking very loudly in ecstasy. It is really true, I have heard and seen it. Not sure if they still do it. In the 1870s Kookas were already practicing Non-Cooperation, Swadeshi (wearing of local clothing) and Cow Protection. They rebelled and 66 of them (many were children) were blown away by cannons in January 1872 at this place near our village. When I was growing up in Jamalpura, there was an annual function, Keertan Darbaar, held by the Namdharis to commemorate the sacrifice of the martyrs. That infertile field used to have tents, stalls, langar, everything for a few days. They demanded that a memorial be built at that place. A memorial to the martyrs was finally built in 1993. For years, we did not even know the names of the 66 martyrs. Due to the untiring efforts of Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich, the names became finally known a few years ago. I visited the memorial in 2006. Very nice and well-maintained place. Brought back old memories of visiting the annual Keertan and Fair, listening to Gurbani, having langar and buying toys during the fair. I still cannot believe that I used to live near such a historic place.

When I was growing up listening to all my favorite songs, I had no idea if I will ever have them in my actual possession. Later I did have them in the form of tapes, CDs, mp3 files etc. Of course, the popular ones were issued by HMV or converted to the latest media by enthusiasts. About never heard songs, I did not know anything about them until the legendary Hindi Film Geet Kosh was published. I marveled at the huge lists of songs in the 5 volumes and wondered if I will ever get to listen to them. It is not a secret that HMV has been very stupid in not saving the recordings of non-popular songs. This is our cultural heritage and they should have had a museum for the rare songs. The task fell on the shoulders of the obsessively crazy record collectors, who moved heaven and Earth to collect records

from all corners of the world. Here is an article on these dedicated people from the Journal of The Sangeet Natak Akademy. Of course, the list is incomplete; they don't have any Pakistani collectors such as Allahdad Khan, or the commercial collectors such as Akbar Shah and Suman Chauasiya.

I stood first in my school in the 6th grade. I sort of knew but for everybody else it was a big surprise. Mainly because I was in Section B, where people from nearby villages were enrolled and generally believed to be not as smart as the Malerkotla city boys who were in Section A, and one of them always stood first. In the meantime my father had remarried and my new mom wanted me with her in Ludhiana. So, in 1958, I moved to Ludhiana and enrolled in the Khalsa National Higher Secondary School on Shahpur Road, Ludhiana. Just outside the school there was a lending library in a kiosk. Deposit was 5 rupees and one could borrow a book for rupee 1 for 24 hours or less. It had all kinds of books and magazines that high school students would find interesting, pulp novels by popular authors. I remember Manohar Kahaniyan, Chandamama etc. What caught my eye was a novel called Jasoosi Duniya (Detective World) by Ibn-e-Safi in Urdu. I read it and liked it. He had about 80 of them, I read them all in a month or so, reading 3-4 per day! Afterwards, I eagerly awaited the next monthly issue. This series was published in Pakistan and was distributed in India by a publisher in Allahabad. These guys also translated it into Hindi and sold it about three months later. At that time, nobody in school knew that I could read Urdu. So, I read the Urdu version and when the Hindi version came, a few of my friends borrowed and read it as soon as it came. I asked my friends what the puzzle or the mystery was. I thought for a minute and explained the mystery to them! Later I did tell them that I could read and write Urdu fluently, and had read it in Urdu three months earlier, they were not too happy. In the Urdu version the lead detective was called Faridi, in the Hindi version he was changed to Vinod. I believe other names, including his sidekick Hameed and the villains were not changed. Page 1 from the first book, Diler Mujrim.

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In the mid-sixties to early 70s the cinema halls were in bad shape in the US, mainly because of the popularity of color TV. Whenever I went to see a movie in Pittsburgh, hardly 10 people would be there. So, the owners did not bother to send people out. One could buy a ticket at lunch and stay inside all day! I and a friend Govind Ramachandra Rao did just that in 1970. He was one year senior to me and we were also room-mates for about 6 months. We saw a movie three times in one sitting! This movie had 15 main characters, about 50 more credited and another 25 uncredited people that were spotted by the fans. Here is Jerry Lewis in a car, just before he is about to drive over the police chief's hat gleefully! Here is Jack Benny in a car, who stopped to ask if people on the roadside needed help. Ethel Merman, who played an obnoxious mother-in-law, shouted back at him. Jack did his famous, Well, and drove away. Of course, I am talking about It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. My favorite film, must have seen a dozen times, to enjoy all those comedic actors again and again. Around 1972 we saw on TV, fans lining up for miles outside the cinema halls for Godfather and the same thing was repeated in Pittsburgh. Soon after the Supreme Court said it was OK to show films like I Am Curious (Yellow) (Erotic) and Deep Throat (Pornographic) and the audience was back in droves, to lap up Sex and Violence that could not be shown on the small screen at home.

Around 1954, still unsettled from the Partition, my father and my grandfather went to work in Dehri-on-Sone for jobs on some construction projects. My grandmother was left alone with her teenage son, young daughter and me to feed. She ran out of money. She had a brother who was earning a living in Tanganyika Territory, British East Africa. So, she sent a

person to Ludhiana, where her sister-in-law lived, got her brother's address from her, had me write an aerogramme to him asking for money so that she could buy a sewing machine. Her brother had a reputation for being a miser, but he came through and sent a money order for Rs 200, which the postman delivered, after taking his cut of Rs 10, for delivering the money safely. My grandma stitched clothes for everybody in the village (I kept the accounts with lines like, Jwala Singh, Kurta pajama, Rs 2) and that is how we survived for a few years before the two men returned from Bihar in 1956. Grandma ho to aisee! Bhai ho to aisaa! Happy Rakhi! Here she (on the right) is with a friend, sorting out the ingredients for Panjeeeree, a special diet given to ladies after childbirth, I wish I had taped their conversation. From the late 70s.

For a few years (1957-1959), our family lived in a house on Field Gunj Street Number 3, on Shahpur Road in Old Ludhiana. [My grandmother had relatives there.] The cross street is Jail Road, it goes to the Ludhiana Jail. My father told me that that area was full of Muslims before 1947. When I lived there, only one family of Muslims lived in the only mosque in the area. All the other residences and shops had been taken over by the refugees. They became uprooted from all over Pakistan, but we called them simply Jhangis. I had many classmates and one teacher, who were refugees. I know about three types of them, I am sure there are others that I did not run into. 1. Rehriwalas (Handcart pushers). These guys took their handcarts to nearby streets and sold fruit, vegetables, fabric, cosmetics, bangles, stationery etc. They bargained hard. I remember one of them, shouting every minute or so, Anna Hikk Te Kele Chaa! (Four bananas for 1/16 of a Rupee.) We made fun of him because he said Hikk, not Ikk, but he smiled wryly and did not mind as long as we bought bananas. I can only imagine now what painful memories the poor guy brought with him. 2. Pheriwalas (Traveling salesmen). The father of one of my classmates was one. He used to load his bicycle with things to sell in trunks and bags and bike to all the nearby villages, staying in Dharamshalas (Charity Inns) and eating whatever he could buy in the villages. He was gone for 4-6 months, until all his stuff was sold. 3. Rich Jhangis. These guys must have brought money with them, because they took over the Muslim shops in the area. Most shops were in the next-door Karimpura Bazar. In an unrelated note, I have been told that Sahir Ludhianvi was born in the area and went to a nearby Khalsa School, but I have been unable to trace either the house or the school. Picture of Karimpura Bazar (recent) from the internet.

After finishing high school with Bookkeeping and Accounting as special subjects, my father was married. People from my mother's side were from East Punjab (Village Jarg) but had business interests in Daska, near Lahore.

I understand they owned sugar factories. So, my father got a large amount of stuff as dowry, lots of furniture for all the rooms, kitchen stuff, cash, jewelry etc. He was happily employed as a bank clerk near Anarkali Bazar in Lahore. Then, suddenly, he had to leave it all behind and run to Amritsar by train with his life, wife, me and minimum stuff. It took him 10 years to find his footing again. He told me that during these years, he worked as a carpenter, blacksmith, brick-layer, ran a small business making Persian wheels etc. He worked in many cities in the Punjab and Bihar. In the meantime, my mother died of tuberculosis in 1953. After he and his father returned from Bihar with some money, my grandmother got him married again. Then, she went to Ludhiana to see one of her cousins to provide my dad with some work. This cousin owned a workshop on Shahpur Road in Field Gunj and also was a building contractor. So, he got him the sub-contract of some work on the ceiling of Laxmi Cinema, Ludhiana that was being built in 1956-57. One day, he was sitting on one of girders on the ceiling inspecting some work, when a guy called him down. My father told me that the conversation went something like this. Guy: You are wearing glasses, you look like you are educated. What are you doing on the ceiling? Dad: Yes, I am a high school graduate with Bookkeeping and Accounting as special subjects. I am a sub-contractor. Guy: I am a sub too, but this is side business. I am a partner in Calcutta Industry Works in Miller Gunj, we make cycle frames, handle bars, spokes etc. and export it everywhere. Our current accountant is old and is retiring soon. Would you like to work for us? Dad: Of course, tell me where to come and when. That is how my father got his first real job after partition, a job that he was trained for. The factory had about 50 employees and soon he was the Manager/Accountant earning Rs 400 a month. He even hired his own dad as a store-keeper, because that is what grandpa did most of his life in the Railways in Ajmer! From then on, he never looked back, did the same kind of work in many similar factories, in Ludhiana, Khanna and Mandi Gobindgarh. You could say he finally got his freedom in 1957. Happy Independence Day! My father, early 50s, some function.

I was born on a Full Moon day in December. Full Moon day is called punnyaa in Panjabi, so my mother's sisters named me Punnoo, also the name of the legendary lover of the Sassi-Punnoo fame. I like that name. All my close relatives (father, mother, grandparents, uncles, aunties etc.) have always called me Punnoo. I was officially named when my grandmother [Ishwra Devi] took me to a Gurdwara and the priest closed his eyes, opened the holy book at a random page, and put his finger on a random letter, H. My grandmother chose Harjit (=Conqueror of All). I like that name, but nobody ever called me that. When I became of school-going age, my grandmother took me to Pandit Radhakishan of S A Jain Primary school,

Malerkotla, because that is where her three sons had started school. By now, the Pandit was old and hard of hearing, so when she said Harjit, he heard Sarjit, and that became my name in the primary school. Sarjit means Conqueror of a Water Tank, I never liked it, nobody ever called me that. The grade eight exam was an official Board of Education exam administered by the Ludhiana District. There was a fee and an official form. On the official form, I quietly changed my name to Surjit (=Conqueror of Gods!), nobody noticed. I have used that name ever since but none of my close relatives have ever called me that. Photos show my grade eight exam result and the High School character certificate. As you can see, some clerk in the Board Office changed my father's name to Pritpal Singh from Prithvipal Singh. The school clerk who typed the Character Certificate was more careful with my father's name but left one miss-spelt word (studnet), perhaps for good luck. I never noticed it before but the printed Character Certificate lists the name of the University conducting the Higher Secondary Exam as PUNjab University, with a U. But that one is in Lahore. Ours is called the PANjab University, with an A 😊

Why me? I am comfortably retired, living in the US. Coming from a lower-middle class family in India, how did it happen to me? Why did it not happen to millions of others in a similar situation? I have been thinking about it. My thoughts. 1. Luck. I was lucky to be born with genes, which made me learn new things fast and be able to reproduce those in exams. I was lucky when R K Pathria showed up in Chandigarh and persuaded me to go to the US. I was lucky when Prof G Wilse Robinson needed an expert in the Ising Model, and, I wrote to him about needing a job at the same time, and he hired me without talking to me or R K Pathria, or a formal application, or recommendation letters and all that. 2. Government Help: I won the National Merit Scholarship in Higher Secondary, which promised me enough money to study all the way to the PhD. My father definitely did not have the money to support my education. 3. Kindness of relatives and friends: My grandmother's brother helped us at a crucial time by sending money. Prof V N Tiwari made my hostel stay and food at the Panjab University totally free. My friend Abnash Julka loaned me the money to pay for all the trips to New Delhi, all the fees needed for applications to ten US universities, TOEFL, GRE, medical exam fees and the airfare, all of it. My father definitely did not have the money for any of that. Lesson: Be born with good genes :) Persuade your Govt to invest generously in education, specially for poor people. Surround yourself with good humans. Surjit Singh and Abnash Julka, September 1969, just before I went to the University of Pittsburgh.

I was discussing with Harmesh the year when Madhubala was born,

again. I have two books on Madhubala but the computer was nearer to the bed. So, I looked up on the wikipedia and sure enough it said 1933 (February 14, of course!). I hadn't visited this article for a while and I scanned it over. One item about her being the biggest star in the world caught my eye. It said it was published in Theatre Arts Magazine, August 52 (she was 19 years old). So, I went to the Worldcat website and looked for the libraries that might have it. The nearest was the UCSD (Univ of California at San Diego) library. Their website indicated that they have issues from the earliest to 1960s. I have been burnt by the info on websites before, so I called them up the next day. The guy at the help desk just repeated what I could see on the website and refused to help me further. So, I called up the next nearest library, the Escondido Public Library. The guy there was very helpful, brought the bound volume of 1952 to his desk and declared that all the issues were present. He said he would hold the volume for me at the front desk. This was a Saturday evening and they were closing in 5 minutes. They were also closed on Sundays. On Monday morning before going to work, I drove there, became a member of the library, borrowed the volume and came to my car. Eagerly looked in the bound volume. All the issues of 1952 were there except the August issue! Mildly cursed the guy for not looking carefully and quietly drove to work. At lunch time, drove to the UCSD campus, somehow found parking after circling a lot and avoiding hitting kids on their lunch break, went to the library, found the volume, found the issue and went to the circulation desk. Presented my Friends of the Library card. The young lady said that the volume has not been issued in a very long time and she needs to put proper stickers on it. She did and scanned it into the database. Then she declared, Sorry, you are not allowed to borrow this. I said I just want to copy a few pages, where are the copiers? She pointed them out. No cash or direct credit card accepted. So, I purchased a Copying Card, put \$5 on it and copied away! Came home after work, scanned it into a pdf and put it on my website. The article is on my website

When my mother was ill, friends and relatives of my father urged him to take her to various Sadhus, Babas etc. and ask for their blessings. Surely, they said, these people have a direct line to God and his wife would be cured. He did do that and my mother did die in August 1953. After this my father lost all faith in all these Babas, Sadhus, Bibis, Pirs, Mahatmas, Sants etc. and in fact cursed them loudly whenever somebody brought them up in a conversation. In spite of this, he never tried to convert anyone to his point of view. If somebody believed religiously in some Sant, he let them be and did not shout at them. Two examples. A few days after our marriage, Harmesh said that she would like to visit the village of Rara Sahib and pay her respects to Sant Rare Wale. I said OK and went to talk to my father. He

said, at this time take her there, afterwards when you get to know her better, explain to her that you don't believe in this nonsense! [Note: Ours was an arranged matter and I had known her for only a few days.] We went there in a bus, attended the assembly, quietly came back. Later I explained to her my position. After that, she has never asked me to take her to any Sant or Bibi ever. We do have photo of the original Rare Wala, Sant Ishar Singh in a kitchen closet. When my father found out that the family of my younger brother Daljit's wife Sharda are devotees of Radha Soamis, he did not object. I believe Sharda has always attended the Radha Soami Satsang in Khanna every Sunday. Nobody has objected and I think nobody else has ever gone with her. [Daljit may correct me about this :)]

After the Chinese invaded India and defeated India soundly in 1962, because of the stupidity of our then-leaders, NCC (National Cadet Corps) became compulsory for High school and college students. I was involved in it for 4-5 years. One Sunday I and my friends were returning from the parade that was held in grounds just beyond the Govt College, Ludhiana, we saw police presence near the main gate. It must have been early or mid-1965. We saw lots activity on the roof of the Chemistry building and soon realized that a film was being shot. We were able to watch the whole thing from the boundary wall. From a distance we saw two people running and some others chasing them. They were doing it again and again. It turned out that it was Bhagat Singh and Rajguru, who, after having shot John Saunders had taken shelter in a college in Lahore and my alma mater, Govt College, Ludhiana was playing the role of that Lahore college!

First film of Dev Anand I saw was Jali Note (1960). I was in the eighth grade and saw it during school hours. Fell in love with all three, Dev Anand, Madhubala and Helen. I was told there would be lots of college girls to watch a Dev Anand film, by golly there were!

I moved to San Diego in 1998. My guru, mentor and friend Prof Raj Kumar Pathria had moved there to be near his son and two daughters. We had dinners in each other's houses, discussed everything under the Sun, but he never mentioned that Indurani, a star of the early era of Hindi films lived there! She passed away in 2012. I can only imagine how much information about that period of Hindi cinema I would have gained from her in 14 years we were in the same city! When he casually mentioned this fact in 2017, I immediately got in touch with her family, interviewed her eldest son, Salim Shah, received full support from her other children, and published her biography.

N S Vishwanath, a fellow RMIMer came to see me and I gave him

copies of all my Hindi films on a hard disk. He gave them to one of his friends, Sheo Khetan. One fine day, Sheo informed me that he has copies of all my movies and he would like to do a project based on them. I ignored his request because most of my projects are very labor-intensive and people don't want to do them. He did not give up, so I requested him to capture photos of all the named actors, and the ones that had a speaking part and even animals. Our hope is to publish a massive album of all the actors who ever worked in Hindi films, to 1960 at least for now. He finished his first book on the cast of Hindi films from 1933 to 1937 in January 2019, he has since published 6, I am working on the 7th and he is working on the 8th!

Before he passed away, I used to call Gurcharan Sandhu and we used to talk about our childhood. Both of us had heard this expression from our grandmothers. It came about because we were poor. Around 1954-1955, my father and my grandfather had gone to Dehri-on-Sone with a local contractor to earn a living. He gave them room and board but no actual money for a year. My grandma had to take care of my uncle Om Prakash, a high school student, me a second grader and her daughter Saranjit Kaur, my three-year old chhoti bua. She bought a sewing machine with some money sent by her brother Pyarelal from Daar-es-Salaam, TTBE Africa. She used to stitch underwear, shirts, nightwear, pants etc. for our neighbors, but there was never enough money. Mostly she made daal (one or other pulse, moong, masaree, urd, gram etc.). The daal was not enough for two rotis that each of us got. In other words, if we made the usual boat-like scoops with a piece of roti, the daal would finish in three-four bites. Hence the phrase, "Laa Laa Ke Khaalo!" What she meant was that we should just dip the roti piece in the daal so as to wet it and eat. It worked! It lasted the whole two rotis and some left over to slurp. What a wonderful childhood!

I probably heard my first joke when I was in 3rd or 4th grade and I got hooked. Later I read joke/anecdote books on Akbar-Birbal, Tenali Ramkrishna and Mullah Naseeruddin. I read all the jokes in Sunday newspapers and magazines. In US, we had the magnificent Carnegie Public Library next to Pitt. There, I read all of Bennet Cerf's books, Milton Berle's huge joke book, Anthology of Jewish Humor, Legman's two-volume study of Rationale of a Dirty Joke, Mad magazine, National Lampoon, and books on scientists' humor like Stress Analysis Of an Evening Gown, Random Walk in Science, the Journal of Irreproducible Results and many others that I may be forgetting. On the Internet, I read all the Blonde jokes, Polish and other ethnic jokes, Light Bulb jokes, Sardarji jokes, you name it, I have read it.

I heard about Pather Panchali when I was in Chandigarh, but there was

no easy way to see it. I assumed that Panchali is Draupadi, so the story is probably about a strong women's travel from A to B. I went to Pittsburgh and saw it, among other Ray movies. Aha, Panchali is a type of Bengali song! In Pittsburgh I had a Marathi roommate for 5 years. He used to play Marathi songs all the time from tape. Naturally, ghanashyaama sundaraa became my favorite. I asked him if it is a non-film song. He said it is from a very famous movie called Amar Bhoopali, MD Vasantrao Desai. The movie was not available (this is 1971, videos came around 1983). So, Amar is eternal, the story is probably about an immortal lady from Bhoopal or related to a king (=bhuupaal), I thought. Couple of weeks ago I found it on youtube and watched it. Aha, Bhoopali is a kind of Marathi song, related to morning! I liked the movie very much and I cried while watching it. This is the second Vasantrao movie that is going to make me cry every time I watch it, the first one being Jhanak Jhanak Payal Baje.

My grandmother told me always to be honest, not because it is the best policy, but because it is the right thing to do. o, when in 1969 I had to apply for my Indian passport, I wrote Lahore (Panjab) as the place of birth. had no problem going in and out of India with Indian passports carrying this info until 2000! hen I applied for the green card, I had to write the city, province and (current) country of birth. I was told that it was a big deal to lie to the federal govt on paper, so I had to write Lahore (Panjab) Pakistan. ecause of that I was always given 'special' treatment both at the Indian and the US Immigration checkpoints. In 2006, I applied for and obtained a Pakistani Visa stamped on my US passport. I was hoping to visit some friends, but never did, ran out of time. On return to the US, I was asked, why did I go to Pakistan, which cities I visited and list the names of persons and places I visited! I told them I never did visit and showed them the absence of in and out stamps. I was let go :)

PS: Perhaps in this case, I should have ignored my grandmother's advice and should have put down Ludhiana or Malerkotla as the place of my birth.

I have great memories with my grandfather (father's father), will share them someday, but he died early and I did not get to talk to him much about his parents or his life. Most of my growing years were spent with my grandmother from whom I learned a lot about our early family history, her experiences in Ajmer, and what she heard from her mother-in-law about her stay in Darjeeling. I spent less time with my father, because he was away earning a living after having been uprooted after the partition and, later, when I went to college, I visited him on the weekends. However, I learned a lot from him about early family history, his experiences in Ajmer, Lahore and his efforts in finding a steady job. I regret not having talked to my two uncles in detail about their experiences. Once in a while they would open

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

up about the horrors they saw during the partition. Many of you still have your grandparents, parents around. I beg you, plead with you to interview them in detail, video tape, or otherwise write down their experiences. It is a part of your heritage, do not let it get lost.

After my birth mom passed away of TB in 1953, my father did not want to marry again. But my grandmother insisted and he got married again. She was my step-mother only in name, she treated me as her own son, making sure that I was fed right, dressed properly and spent my summer vacations in Jagraon, her hometown. I have fond memories of her and all my uncles, aunts and cousins in Jagraon. Later she had a son of her own but her love for me never diminished. Once I finished high school, she wanted me to get married! I should have listened to her; I would have had many great-grandchildren by now :) Sadly she passed away when my brother was about 6 years old.

After I retired, my son Jaideep got a job in East Lansing, got married and had a son. They visited us every winter in San Diego. But I wanted to be near his family for two reasons, 1. To watch my grandson grow 2. So that he can help me promptly when health issues arise. So I talked to Harmesh, she said, nobody moves from San Diego, we are not moving. When I asked about the grandson, she said he will visit us in Winter, we will go there in Summer! Having read G Polya's How to Solve It, I decided to break this difficult problem into smaller, solvable problems. So when we visited East Lansing in 2018, I was able to persuade her to look at some houses, but East Lansing houses are very old, some even built in the 19th century! Of course, she did not like any of them. After returning to San Diego, I said what if we find a house that is less than 10 years old, has a large kitchen, pantry and brand new shining stuff, large bedrooms, many bathrooms. She said she will think about it. So I sent Libby, Jaideep's wife, on a mission to find such a house in the Greater Lansing Area. She looked at many houses. Found one 5 year old near the Airport. So, I asked Jaideep to go there and measure the sound levels of planes taking off and landing at the airport. I asked him to measure it at two locations, in the backyard facing the Airport and inside with all doors closed. Did not like the results. Luckily, Libby found a 3 year old house in West Lansing that met all the requirements. Harmesh looked at the photos and said the basement is unfinished. I said I will have it finished and make it look like another floor, fully carpeted with one more bedroom and a full bathroom. She reluctantly said OK. We sold our house in San Diego (its price had risen almost three times in 20 years!) and moved to Lansing in August 2019. With lots of money left over, we had the basement finished very nicely. Jaideep said we should have a generator because power failures are common in Winter.

Also installed. This house is about 20 minutes by car from Jaideep's house. Soon after the construction work was finished, the pandemic arrived. Somehow we survived that, mainly by following strictly the instructions provided by Dr Guri of Denver, Colorado in a Whatsapp group. In the meantime, Jaideep, Libby and Benjamin came to our house every Saturday for dinner and company. All of enjoyed that. So, last April I made my next move. I suggested to Harmesh that it would be great to move to East Lansing near Jaideep for the same two reasons mentioned above. She was hesitant to move again so soon, but agreed to see houses. Luckily we found one near Jaideep's house, about 3 minutes by car and 20 minutes by walking. It was built in the 50s but had been re-modeled with many upgrades. Benjamin's school is actually nearer our house than his parents' house. The packers packed our stuff on May 22 and the trucks moved the boxes to the new location on May 23. So far, we have all the beds ready for sleeping and the kitchen ready for cooking. However, we still have about 100 boxes to open and put stuff where it belongs! It will take a few months. In the meantime, Benjamin shows up with his mom, after school for milk and cookies whenever he feels like it :)

When I bought a copy of the very first edition of the first published volume of Hindi Film Geet Kosh (1951-1960) in 1980, I was overjoyed. I had never seen anything like it. After a few months I calmed down and started finding misprints. One of the most annoying was the name of this lyricist spelt as Raja Mehndi Ali Khan (with an extra 'n'). I hesitated to contact the author because, I thought, it is too late to do anything. Also surely, somebody must have told him by now. Imagine my surprise when I obtained the Revised Edition in 1997, it had the same mistake! To this day I deeply regret not having sent him a postcard in 1980. It turns out that it is a very common mistake, even producers of films, who hired him to write the lyrics, misspelled his name. See here a title card from Jab Yaad Kisee Kee Aate Hai (1967) Please note that his name has the word Mehdi, not Mehndi. Note: This has been corrected in all the latest editions and the Database Website.

APPENDIX

List of Publications of Surjit Singh

All of the following papers are in refereed journals.

Short communications have been marked with an asterisk.

I am proud of the fact that I have 22 papers with the world-famous author, Raj Kumar Pathria.

I am probably his biggest collaborator.

I have published in all branches in physics (Phs. Rev. A, B, D and E), except nuclear physics. Could not find a decent nuclear physics co-worker.

I am also proud of my 9 papers in Phys. Rev. Letts.

Here are four of my most important co-writers (in chronological order).



Figure 7: Raj Kumar Pathria

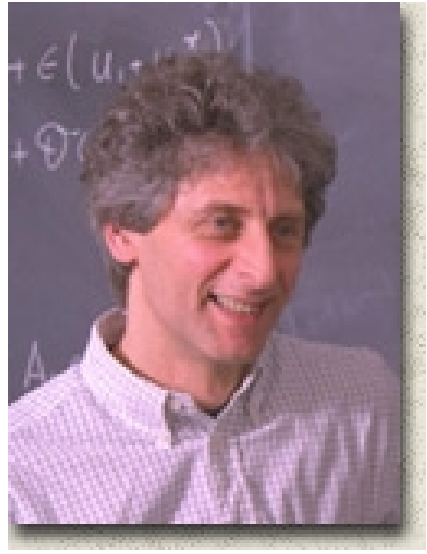


Figure 8: David Jasnow



Figure 9: G Wilse Robinson



Figure 10: Richard Wilde

Publications from the University of Pittsburgh

1. M. N. Barber, D. Jasnow, **S. Singh** and R. A. Weiner

Critical Behavior of the Spherical Model with Enhanced Surface Exchange

J. Phys. C7, 3491 (1974)

2. **S. Singh** and D. Jasnow

Crossover Scaling Function for Exchange Anisotropy: XY and Planar Models

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3. **S. Singh** and D. Jasnow

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PHOTO GALLERY



*Figure 11: Grandfather Mansaram,
with cousin Paramveer, c. 1955*



*Figure 12: Grandmother Ishwara Devi
with brother Daljit Singh, c. 1968.*



Figure 13: Father Prithvipal Singh, 1951



Figure 14: Mother (right) Gurdev Kaur with her sister Naseeb Kaur c. 1959



Figure 15: Father Prithvipal Singh, Uncle Gurdev Singh, Cousin Charan Kamal Singh, Brother Daljit Singh, Cousin Sewak Singh, Uncle Om Prakash, 1975



Figure 16: Surjit and Harmesh, 1978.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY



Figure 17: Son Jaideep, me, son Rajdeep, c. 1988



Figure 18: Marilyn Monroe and me c. 2011



Figure 19: Libby and Jaideep, married 2014



Figure 20: Jaideep, me and grandson Benny, 2023

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Professor Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fanatic, period. He is a retired Theoretical Physicist. He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996. He has had a website since 1999,

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